

THE  
GREAT MINISTRY

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GEORGE E. HERR



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# The Great Ministry

BY  
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## FOREWORD

This book, like its companion volume, *The Training of the Chosen People*, is composed of chapters published on successive weeks during the year, in a number of weekly and daily papers. They were designed to interpret the Bible Study Union Course of Sunday School Lessons on the Gospel History of Christ.

These chapters were not composed by a painful reference to authorities or to the opinions of others. The main lines of investigation as to the gospel narratives were not unfamiliar, and with these in mind the author has sat down before the text, seeking its disclosure of the portraiture of Jesus. While the task of verification and revision has been done with care, the book, as a whole, has almost written itself. It has been a happy experience to record what one has seen of the divine Man in and through the pages of the gospels.

This study has freshly impressed upon the mind of the writer the fact that the person of Christ is the stronghold of evangelical Christianity. The great problem that confronts Naturalism and Agnosticism is the problem of the classification of Jesus. May we not be compelled to put Him back of the mundane order into the cosmic order? No line of investigation is more helpful in answering this vital question than a first-hand study of the New Testament portraiture of Jesus.

Through the whole course of his joyful labor the author has been encouraged to believe that he was doing something worth while by appreciations as to the helpfulness of these expositions written by those into whose hands they fall. Personally unknown to one another, these lovers of the Master and the author of this book discovered that they shared kindred convictions and experiences. The author can desire no better fortune for this child of his spirit than that it may render a like service in a wider circle.

GEORGE E. HERR.

Newton Centre, Mass., October 31, 1908.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I. THE PROMISED SAVIOUR.....	1
II. THE ADVENT .....	5
III. THE SILENT YEARS.....	9
IV. PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD.....	13
V. THE INITIATION OF JESUS.....	17
VI. THE RECOGNITION OF JESUS.....	21
VII. THE BEGINNING OF THE PUBLIC MINISTRY	26
VIII. TRUE RELIGION AND TRUE WORSHIP.....	31
IX. JESUS' OWN VIEW OF HIS MISSION.....	35
X. THE EARLY SELF-REVELATION OF JESUS...	39
XI. THE FIDELITY OF JESUS TO HIMSELF.....	43
XII. THE RIGHTS OF THE SOUL .....	47
XIII. DISCERNING THE LORD .....	51
XIV. THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.....	55
XV. WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?.....	59
XVI. THE MOTIVE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.....	63
XVII. THE EVIDENCES OF THE MESSIAH.....	67
XVIII. THE THREE ATTITUDES OF MEN TOWARD JESUS.....	71
XIX. AN EXPOSITION OF THE KINGDOM.....	75
XX. THE FINGER OF GOD.....	79
XXI. THE CONDITIONS OF EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN WORK .....	83
XXII. A GREAT TEMPTATION.....	87
XXIII. THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.....	91
XXIV. THE UNITY OF THE CHARACTER OF JESUS.	95
XXV. THE GREAT CONFESSION.....	99
XXVI. FORCES THAT ADVANCE AND RESIST THE KINGDOM.....	103
XXVII. THE DIVINE ASSURANCE.....	107
XXVIII. THE MOTIVES TO FORGIVENESS.....	111
XXIX. UNRESPONSIVENESS TO TRUTH .....	115
XXX. FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE .....	119

CHAPTER		PAGE
XXXI.	OUR LORD'S WITNESS TO HIMSELF.....	123
XXXII.	TRUE AND FALSE RELIGION.....	127
XXXIII.	THE USE OF PRIVILEGE.....	130
XXXIV.	THE JOY OF GOD .....	134
XXXV.	THE LORD OF LIFE AND OF DEATH.....	138
XXXVI.	THE MIND OF THE MASTER.....	142
XXXVII.	THE REWARDS OF THE KINGDOM.....	146
XXXVIII.	THE SERENITY OF THE MASTER.....	150
XXXIX.	THE SECRET OF JESUS .....	154
XL.	GOING UP TO JERUSALEM.....	157
XLI.	THE NATURE OF SIN.....	161
XLII.	THE WITNESS OF JESUS.....	165
XLIII.	THE TEMPER OF JESUS AFTER HIS WIT- NESS AGAINST JERUSALEM.....	169
XLIV.	THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.....	173
XLV.	THE LAST SUPPER.....	177
XLVI.	THE FAREWELL MESSAGE.....	181
XLVII.	THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS.....	185
XLVIII.	CAIAPHAS AND PILATE.....	189
XLIX.	"HE DIED FOR OUR SINS".....	193
L.	THE LIVING JESUS.....	197
LI.	"THE SAME JESUS".....	201
LII.	INTERPRETING JESUS .....	206

# THE GREAT MINISTRY

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE PROMISED SAVIOUR.

#### Scattered References.

The principal argument upon which the Apostles relied to convince their Hebrew brethren that Jesus should be accepted as Lord and Saviour, was based on the Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah. If we accept the theory of many modern scholars that a somewhat later date than formerly was assumed must be assigned to certain parts of the Old Testament, the argument is hardly affected, for the Old Testament, as the Septuagint translation conclusively proves, was in existence in its present form centuries before the Christian era. Nor is the strength of the argument seriously affected by the theory of many of these scholars that certain Messianic references are less specific than the older authorities affirmed. Again, the force of the reasoning does not depend upon the minute interpretation of isolated passages. When we survey the course of prophetic teaching in a large way, its forward look becomes very impressive, and when we combine the specific anticipations of individual prophets in a single conception we can hardly fail to see that we have before us a picture of the Messiah which is almost startlingly actualized in the career of Jesus of Nazareth.

We are all familiar with the way one picture may be concealed in another. When we look intently at the representation from several angles of vision we come to see in it what was not perceptible at first. There emerges, it may be, from a landscape, the form of a

human countenance, and, after we have once seen the hidden portraiture, we can hardly see anything else in the drawing. Or, to take another illustration, as you stand in the Franconia Notch of the White Mountains, between the Eagle Cliff of Mount Lafayette and Cannon Mountain, and look up at the jagged declivity of the latter, you see simply a mass of rocks; but as you fasten your attention upon them you discern the perfect representation of a human face, across which the scud of the flying clouds breaks. It is the famous "Old Man of the Mountain."

Something like this takes place in our study of the Hebrew prophets. We can relate their utterances in a large degree to the circumstances of their own times; we can see in them ordinary history, and the report of orations, but all the time we are aware that we have not fathomed the depths of this wonderful literature. It points forward to a future. It contains clear but scattered hints and suggestions of the distinctive features of the new era. These anticipations center about a Person. And while, perhaps, not enough is told about Him to enable us to forecast with precision just what manner of man He will be, at the same time enough is told about Him to enable us to recognize Him with certainty when He appears.

The general correctness of this statement is confirmed by the impression that the Hebrew prophets made upon their own people. The Jews were thoroughly responsive to the Messianic hope that animates these writings. Indeed, there are many indications that this hope, throughout the centuries immediately before the birth of Jesus, became the dominant note of Judaism, coloring the political attitude of the Hebrews toward Greece and Rome, and furnishing the imaginative background of their ethics and religion. To be sure the popular interpretations of these prophecies failed, through want of insight, to reach the truth as to their spiritual significance, but



probably there were always some fine natures that were attuned to the historic fulfilment (Lu. 2:25, 37, 38; Jo. 1:41, 49). And we know that the favorite and effective argument of Paul to convince the Jews as to the claims of Jesus rested upon the right interpretation of the prophecies (Acts 17:2,3; 18:28).

But the detailed forecasts of the Messiah are not unsatisfactory. Students of the Scripture will find it exceedingly profitable to arrange the specific Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah and their New Testament fulfilments

in parallel columns, and ponder them so that they make their natural and legitimate impression on their own minds.

He was to be born at Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Mt. 2:1; Lu. 2:11). His active mission was to be ushered in by a great preacher (Mal. 3:1; 4:5, 6; Is. 40:3; Jo. 1:15-28). He was to teach righteousness, and to do mar-

velous works of mercy (Is. 61:1-3; Lu. 4:17-21; 8:1; Mt. 11:5). He was to be recognized by some as the Messiah (Zech. 9:9; Mt. 21:5-9). He was to be rejected by the nation, but betrayed by an individual for thirty pieces of silver (Is. 53:3; Zech. 11:12, 13; Jo. 19:14, 15; Mt. 26:15). He was to be crucified (Ps. 22:16; Jo. 19:18), with malefactors (Is. 53:12; Mt. 27:38), given gall and vinegar for drink (Ps. 69:21; Jo. 19:28-30), but His bones were not to be broken (Ps. 34:20; Ex. 12:46; Jo. 19:33), and His vesture was to be divided by lot (Ps. 22:18; Jo. 19:23, 24). He was to die as an offering for the sins of others (Is. 53:10; Mt. 20:28). The grave was not



**The Prophet Isaiah.**  
By Michael Angelo.

to hold Him (Ps. 16:9, 10; Acts 2:31). He was to establish an enduring kingdom (Is. 53:10, 11; Mt. 28: 19, 20).

Such forecasts and fulfilments might be largely multiplied. They are too numerous and detailed to be accounted for on the ground of chance coincidence. But the argument does not turn wholly on these definite and almost startling correspondences. Beneath details there is revealed the form and countenance of the suffering servant of Jehovah, the Redeemer who is at the same time "the man of sorrows." The drift, the general impression, the mood which these writers beget, however, are the great thing. Still, when we seek an adequate description of the character and mission and achievement of Jesus, how often we are constrained to turn to the account given of Him long centuries before His birth (Is. ch. 53)!

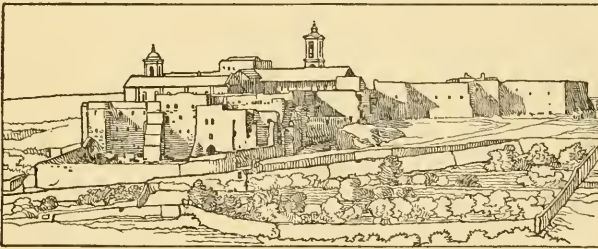
It is said that the term "indenture" arose from the custom of dividing the parchment which contained the contract by a notched line cut with a knife. When each indentation fitted into its counterpart the document was self-attested as genuine. Something like that is true of the prophetic representation of the Messiah and the historic life of Jesus of Nazareth. History and prophecy match each other, and this correspondence demonstrates that the history is simply the development of the plan of God, and that the history is to be interpreted in the light of the prophecy.

## CHAPTER II.

### THE ADVENT.

Mt. 1:18-25; Lu. 1:5-66; 2:1-20; Jo. 1:1-18.

"There is nothing so easy," says Principal Fairbairn, "as to change conditions into causes, to mistake the enumeration of formal elements for the discovery of the plastic mind." The administrative system of the Græco-Roman power, the developments of later Judaism, and the Messianic expectation do something to explain the readiness of the world for the advent



From a photograph.

The Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem.

of Jesus, but they do nothing to account for the vital spiritual energy that emanated from His personality, and transmuted the historic forces into historic Christianity. Within the grain of wheat there resides a marvelous vital force. When the seed is planted in the soil, that force, like a loom, weaves the chemical constituents of the earth, the moisture and the sunshine, into the growing plant. A spiritual force like that entered the realm of human life at the birth of Jesus, and ever since it has been weaving human thought, human aspirations, human institutions, into new patterns, more or less conformable to its own type. The civilized world has made no mistake in

declaring by its calendar that the birth of Jesus marks the beginning of a new era. Whether or not we are personally followers of Jesus, we are confronted by the fact that His career marks the introduction of a novel and tremendous spiritual force into the life of humanity. And we are to appraise that force not merely by the record of it in the gospels, but by a sympathetic appreciation of the whole course of history as influenced by Jesus, just as we truly apprehend the Mississippi, not simply by exploring its sources, but by traversing the vast floods that it pours through the continent to the gulf.

It is from this point of view that we should study the narratives that make up the Christmas story. They are to be interpreted in the light of the subsequent history. If the life whose beginning on the earth they record can be fairly classified as simply human, they become improbable. If, on the other hand, Jesus cannot be fairly classified with men, and if His influence has interpenetrated human life with divine forces, and brought men everywhere, when they have responded to it, into conscious vital fellowship with God, we come to these narratives with reverent confidence.

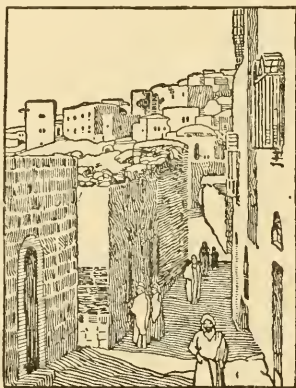
After all, what is the essential thing in all these records but this—that Jesus is not the product of the forces that are resident in human life and in the order of the world, but His personality is identical with the creative intelligence and will that is the ground and source of human life and the visible universe (Jo. 1:1-4)? And yet, at the same time, this personality enters into human life and the order of the world, becoming absolutely identified with the experiences and conditions of humanity (Jo. 1:14). In His nature Jesus is identical with God, in His life He is identified with man.

From this point of view we cannot miss seeing the beauty and satisfactoriness of the advent stories.

We know little about Mary, the mother of Jesus. But if the narratives in the gospel of Luke were among the memories she cherished in her heart, they reflect the purity and delicacy of her sweet woman's soul. And she had such insight and spiritual elevation that she gave utterance to the supreme hymn in human literature (Lu. 1:46-55). Surely she was fitted above all women to be the medium of the divine life.

It is also in harmony with the marvelous event that some prophetic spirits should have been responsive to the coming fact (Lu. 1:42-45). Nor is it strange that, as the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies drew near, sympathetic hearts should have been moved to look for it, and should have come to the town that Micah had foretold would be the birthplace of the Messiah (Micah 5:2; Mt. 2:1-10). Nor do we wonder that a specific divine announcement accompanied the birth of Jesus. In realms of being beyond our own there must have been a profound interest in the great revelation, and it was congruous that those who felt this most should have broken through the frontiers of the realm of nature to interpret to men something of its significance (Lu. 2:8-20). Indeed, without the song of the angels we should have felt that the sympathy of all ranges of being in the astounding event was insufficiently manifested.

Certainly, when we take these narratives together they are marked by a deep interior agreement. If Jesus was the "Word" made flesh (Jo. 1:14), every



A Street in Bethlehem.

difficulty vanishes. The parts of the story hang together. The narrative is congruous with itself, on the plane on which it is projected, as a mathematician might say.

But the parts of the advent story are not only congruous with each other, they are in deep interior accord with the subsequent career of Jesus. As Dr. Newman Smyth has suggested, the story of the resurrection matches the story of the advent as a glorious sunset matches a beautiful sunrise on a perfect day in June, and the deeds of power and words of wisdom match the advent and the resurrection as the golden hours of such a day match its beginning and its close.

Upon this fact of the inner coherence and congruity of the gospel narrative we may build a noble argument for the historic truthfulness of the whole record. If the Evangelists imagined the narratives of the birth of Jesus they addressed themselves to a stupendous task, for they made it necessary that they should portray a life that would match their introduction. No temple constructed by human hands could match that porch. If, however, they did not imagine but described; if the record of the birth and the record of the life are records of fact, we can account for the poise with which they tread these perilous heights, and for the unrivaled success with which they have carried their story on. The reply that Rousseau gave in his *Émile* to those who asserted that the gospel story was a fiction is still of force: "Then the inventor would be more astounding than the hero."

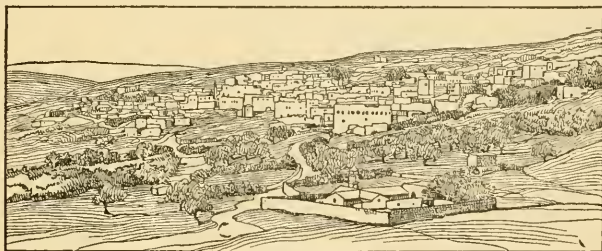
## CHAPTER III.

### THE SILENT YEARS.

Mt. ch. 2; Lu. 2:21-52.

We have only a hint or two in the gospel narratives as to the life of Jesus until He had reached His thirtieth year; but, for all that, we may have a tolerably distinct picture of the conditions under which the boy grew into young manhood, and the habit of His life.

Judaism has developed and put in practice one of the noblest ideals of the home the world has ever seen. To this day the typical Jewish home leaves



Nazareth.

From a photograph.

little to be desired. In it there is a mingling of conjugal, parental and filial devotion that binds human hearts into the higher unity of the family. In the Jewish household, then as now, the wife and mother had a place of peculiar honor. The reluctance, even of the poor Russian Jews who have found refuge in our American cities, to permit their daughters to enter gainful occupations; their desire that girls shall be trained in the home so as to be efficient mistresses of the homes they are to have, is a survival to our own times of the ancient Hebrew ideal of the sanctity of the home and of woman's place in it. The



most beautiful and moving love story in the world is the narrative in Genesis of the love of Jacob and Rachel. Making proper allowance for Oriental customs, no woman could desire a greater love than that of Jacob. After she had been dead forty years she still held her place in her husband's heart. Into such a home our Lord was born.

We cannot doubt that the best ideals of Hebrew womanhood were fully realized in Mary, the mother of Jesus. Protestant Christians, in their revolt from the Roman adoration of Mary, should not forget that she is forever, as the angel said, "blessed among women." Does the Sistine Madonna idealize too much the glorious womanliness, the tender motherhood, the celestial consciousness of Mary? We can hardly think so. And this was the mother at whose breast the child Jesus nursed. Her lips taught His to lisp the sweet Aramaic; her deft fingers made His baby clothes; her hand steadied His first steps; upon her bosom, into her ear, He confided His childish joys and sorrows; her voice taught Him the law and history of their ancient race, and framed His first prayers. No picture of His boyhood is complete that does not enshrine the face, the form, the voice, the manner of His mother.

Doubtless it was a home of slender means. But poverty is always relative, and there is no reason for thinking that the household was ever in want. With industry and good management there was enough.

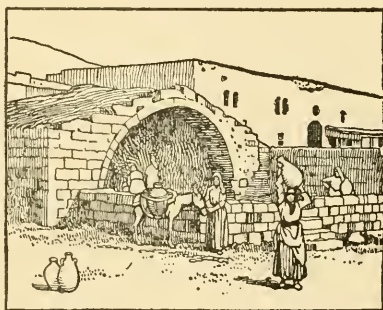
We get just one glimpse of Jesus as He is approaching adolescence (Lu. 2:41-52). Artists have sought with varying success to portray the incident of the visit to the temple and Jesus' conversation with the doctors. Hofmann's picture is well known, but Tissot's representation of the boy leaving the temple, walking between Mary and Joseph, is singularly happy. As you look into the boy's eyes you see



that His soul belongs to a different realm from that in which Joseph, or even Mary, is living. He is the dutiful human child, but already He has heard in the depths of His own soul the call of His Father's work.

Before machinery had taken the place of hand labor one of the most attractive occupations was that of a carpenter. It is clean, wholesome work, and any success in it demands the intelligence, precision and skill that only come from long training of the mind, the eye and the hand. The fashioning of an Oriental plough-yoke was not the work of a tyro, while a well made and fitted door or window was no easier a piece of work then than now. Our most advanced psychology is inculcating that a high place should be given to manual training in the development of intelligence and character. Singularly enough, this is the precise discipline that Jesus appears to have had in His boyhood home.

All the outward conditions of the life of Jesus were favorable to the production of a strong, noble type of character. But outward conditions are not the final determining element in the issues of any human life. The first temptations of Jesus could not have been those which met Him in the desert after His baptism. In the happiest and most united households there are inevitable irritations and annoyances arising from the subtle conflict of temperaments. Even when young men do not yield to lower solici-



**The Virgin's Fountain, Nazareth.**

As this is the only spring in the town, Jesus and His mother must have gone to it daily.

tations, the temptation to envy, pride, and selfishness may be almost overpowering. The purity of the home atmosphere may not be antiseptic against these subtle bacteria. To be sure, this home was Oriental, and we Occidentals find it difficult to reproduce imaginatively all of its intimate details, but this home was human, and that is something we can all interpret. Let any young man or woman, trained in a loving home, with brothers and sisters, recall the inevitable discipline, even under happiest conditions, of these human associations, and the reminiscence will suggest something of the self-discipline and self-control of Jesus.

It has sometimes been said that you cannot be certain that Jesus was sinless until you have scrutinized every act He ever did. That assertion, however, overlooks the genetic relationship of all acts, and the genetic evolution of character. You see the ship swinging with the tide held by the steel cable to the anchor lodged in the rocks. You can only see a few links of the cable, but you know that the fathoms of it hidden beneath the water are equally strong, because these links you can see are doing their work of holding the ship. The prophet Jeremiah asked (12: 5): "If thou hast run with the footmen, and they have wearied thee, then how canst thou contend with horses?" But if one can contend with horses, surely he has not been wearied by footmen. The fact that Jesus resisted temptations, concerning which we are well informed, that were, as we shall see, peculiarly insidious and strong, affords a trustworthy basis for a judgment as to His self-conquest in the silent years. The whole cable holds. The contention with horses demonstrates the mastery over the footmen.

## CHAPTER IV.

### PREPARING THE WAY OF THE LORD.

Lu. 3:1-18, and Scattered References.

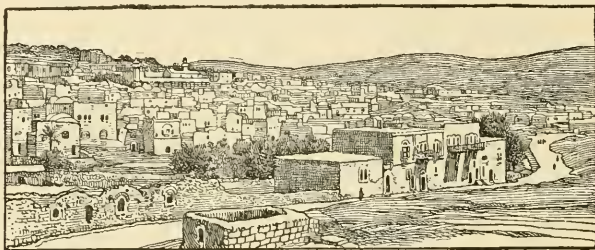
The greatness of John the Baptist has the supreme attestation of the witness of Jesus. He said,—and that at a moment when the faith of John in Himself seemed to waver,—“Among them that are born of women there is none greater than John” (Lu. 7:28). If John did not stand so near Jesus we could more easily recognize the justness of this opinion. And it is an incidental but significant testimony to the greatness of Jesus that a rich, large, heroic figure like that of John the Baptist is almost overlooked when brought near the personality of our Lord.

The proper background for the appreciation of the message and career of John the Baptist is afforded by recalling that, during the period of his activity, the Messianic expectation among the Hebrews was peculiarly vivid. The long delay in the fulfilment of the ancient prophecies had sharpened rather than dulled anticipation. The very conflict of opinions as to how the prophecies were to be fulfilled intensified interest in the great theme. Some held that Jehovah Himself would come to judgment; others that the political sovereignty of Israel would be established over the nations by a series of miraculous events, and others that a new order would be inaugurated under some God-sent representative, in which the interest of righteousness should at least be as prominent as those of political dominion. This general expectation that



John the Baptist.  
By Titian.

Judaism was on the eve of a fulfilment of prophetic forecasts, no matter what the precise interpretation given to them by different parties, created a public temper singularly responsive to the call of a brave and noble personality like that of John the Baptist, whose message struck the chords of conscience, and whose personal life was in thorough agreement with his teaching. Josephus, who seems to go out of his way to avoid mentioning Jesus, records with some detail the deep and wide impression made upon the



Hebron.

The supposed home of John the Baptist.

nation by the preaching of John the Baptist, who announced that the kingdom of God was at hand.

Though John recognized Jesus as the Christ (Jo. 1:29, 36), he did not fully grasp the precise nature of the Messianic kingdom or the method of Jesus (Lu. 7:19). But, in spite of this, his message was as perfectly adjusted to the work of our Lord as though he had understood it more perfectly. Such unconscious co-operations on the part of the workers suggest an impressive inference as to the divine superintendence of human efforts. Men are all the time working like John the Baptist by the light of partial insights. But, as we look back upon their work and appreciate its delicate adjustments to a large purpose, we say:

“Himself from God he could not free;  
He builded better than he knew.”

The specific point at which the preaching of John was adjusted to the message of Jesus, and so became preparative for our Lord's work, was his insistence that the kingdom of God was based upon the thoroughgoing righteousness of all its members. Whatever John's misconception as to the Messianic method (Lu. 3:15-17), he was absolutely clear that the kingdom of God did not embrace the whole nation as such. Abrahamic descent gave no title to membership (Lu. 3:8). The condition of membership was repentance, and the bringing forth of fruit worthy of repentance. We are so familiar with these ideas that it is easy for us to underestimate the profound originality and insight of John the Baptist in taking his stand upon them. They were faithful to the inner spirit and genus of the ancient prophecies, rather than to their letter. They did away at a stroke with all those superficial and conventional distinctions of birth and special privilege, of which men have always made so much, and they laid the foundations of the kingdom of God deep down on the bed rock of personal righteousness. The way by which Jesus secured that righteousness was not the way of John the Baptist, but it did not contradict John's way, or abrogate it. The way of Jesus simply added to repentance the mighty force of faith. But the end that Jesus contemplated—a kingdom of righteousness—is absolutely identical with the ideal of John.

Perhaps John did not fully recognize how his great central principle was to universalize the kingdom of God. Jesus saw it, and taught it (Mt. 25:32), but His disciples did not see it. It took a remarkable series of providences to open the eyes of Peter to the fact (Acts 10:34, 35). As soon as the early church caught a glimpse of it their entire attitude toward the world was revolutionized. When Paul grasped

the central thought of John the Baptist's message, he became the Apostle to the Gentiles. The idea rings through the epistles like a dominant chord in a musical movement, and, in the last chapter of the New Testament, it sounds forth full and clear: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. And . . . he that will, let him take the water of life freely" (Rev. 22:17).

The spirituality, the universality and the democracy of the kingdom of God were in germ in that great doctrine of John the Baptist, and its application to human governments laid the firm foundation of free institutions. When we think of John the Baptist let us not picture him as a rude and shaggy fanatic, or as a vague preacher of righteousness; let us think of him as the man who first taught effectively the great doctrine that membership in the kingdom of God does not depend on birth or position, or upon any of the accidents of fortune, but upon the movement of the soul toward righteousness.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE INITIATION OF JESUS.

Mt. 3: 13—4: 11.

The essential feature of the message of John the Baptist was that membership in the kingdom of God was not dependent upon birth or special privilege of any sort, but upon the attitude of the individual toward the claims of righteousness. The attainment of this right relationship on the part of sinful men involved repentance, which John did not conceive of simply as an emotional experience, but as a resolute turning away from wickedness to righteousness. In his thought of repentance, as throughout the New



The River Jordan.

From a photograph.

Testament, the main element is not sorrow, but action. Rightly conceived, sorrow for sin is simply the reverse side of love of righteousness, but both the sorrow and the love are worthless unless the living spirit actually espouses and works for righteousness. The rite of baptism, which John administered to his disciples, was a true and beautiful symbol of his germinal ideas. It admirably typified the death to sin and the life to righteousness which he was preaching (Rom. 6:2-4).

When Jesus, therefore, came to John desiring to be baptized, it signified that Jesus recognized and

fully accepted the ideas of John for which his baptism stood. In no more effective way could Jesus have declared to the world, that, however high the superstructure might rise which He was to build, He accepted the foundation that had been laid by John.

Jesus adds to the ideas of John most important new conceptions, but the conceptions of Jesus do not contradict those of John. On the contrary, they are in such thorough accord with them that Jesus at once accepted the distinctive teachings of the Baptist as the foundation principles of His own Messianic kingdom. It was given to this greatest of the prophets, the crown and flower of the prophetic impulse in Judaism, to be so true to the past and to the future that above his work there arose the majestic structure of the kingdom of God. From this point of view the tokens of the divine approval at the baptism of Jesus (Mt. 3:16, 17) are not only a witness to Jesus but indirectly they are the strongest testimony to the harmony of the teachings of John with the thought of the Most High.

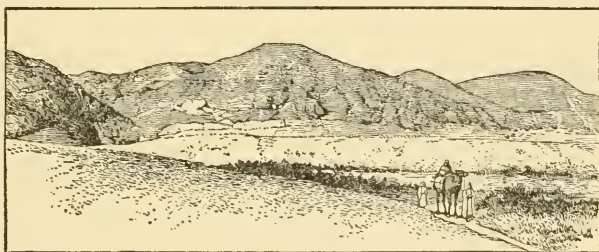
In just what form the mission of Jesus lay in His own mind at this time we cannot say, but we may hold with confidence that the essential features of His teaching and career had risen above the horizon of consciousness, and He knew that He was the Messiah with the relationship to the Most High, the knowledge and the power involved in that office.

The ritual initiation of His mission was accomplished in His baptism. It now remained to vindicate the competency of Jesus for His work in His own consciousness and in the moral consciousness of mankind by the most searching tests of His moral and spiritual fibre. The initiation of baptism was slight and easy compared with the initiation of temptation. The trial to which Jesus was subjected involved the most subtle test of which we can conceive. If the Evangelists simply imagined this narrative, they had such an insight into the depths of personality and the



workings of motives that in comparison with them Æschylus and Shakespeare were children.

The weak place in a great soul is not apt to be in its passions. One cast in the largest and noblest mould may overcome the solicitations of the senses, perhaps not easily, but still without a struggle which shakes the fabric of the life. The very greatness of the spirit gives it power to rule the flesh. The strongest and most insidious temptation that can come to such a one is to use his great endowments, not for sinful or unworthy ends, but for ends that fall short of the highest and noblest. Such a test involves the intellectual as well as the moral nature, for the temptation can only be resisted in view of the clearest



Mount of Temptation.

From a photograph.

The Mount of Temptation (*Mons Quarantania*), the traditional scene of Christ's temptation, is in the rugged wilderness of Judea, west of the Jordan river. In its bare and desolate sides are many holes and caves which were the homes of hermits in past ages.

mental apprehension of those ends. Such a test involves a sympathetic response of the moral nature to this discrimination, of such intensity and volume that the soul which meets it is vindicated as absolutely and totally sound. Such a test is like the hammer stroke upon a bell. Every molecule in the great mass of metal must be in right relation to every other molecule, or else the clear ringing note will be wanting. It was a test like that which marked the completion of the initiation of Jesus.

Coming to the study of the temptation in the light of such reflections we see at once that it reveals both Jesus' conception of the ends for which His divine powers should be used, and His successful resistance of the appeal to use them for any inferior ends. He would use His powers unselfishly. He would not exert them for Himself, even to save his life (Mt. 4:3, 4). He, who a few days later turned water into wine for the sake of others, would not turn stones into bread for the sake of Himself. He would use His powers to corroborate and reward faith but not to originate it (Mt. 4:5-7). He would not throw Himself down from the pinnacle of the temple that men might believe in Him, but He would raise Lazarus from the dead for the sake of the sisters who believed in Him. He would use His divine power to promote righteousness, but not as something to trade with to secure the support of evil (Mt. 4:8-10). He would not worship the Evil One for the sake of the kingdoms of the world, but He would cast out devils.

In those days of searching, Jesus saw that divine powers must be used with complete unselfishness, in rigid subordination to moral motives, and in absolute devotion to righteousness. And He was so thoroughly loyal to these exalted perceptions that He came forth from the trial without even the smell of fire upon His garments.

In the baptism and in the temptation the ritual and actual initiations of Jesus for His work were completed. In the former He linked His mission with the long line of the Hebrew prophets in the person of their last and greatest representative; in the latter He vindicated His competency to be the spiritual leader and Saviour of men. Now that He has resisted every solicitation to use His power unworthily, He uses it all for the help of tempted men. "In that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted" (Heb. 2:18).

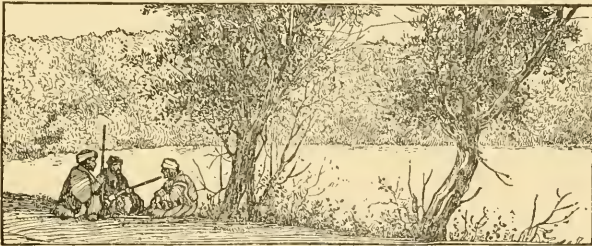
## CHAPTER VI.

### THE RECOGNITION OF JESUS.

Jo. 1:19—2:12.

After Jesus returned from His temptation to the society of men, John the Baptist was the first person to recognize and proclaim Him as the Messiah.

When John baptized Jesus he seems to have had a strong impression that his relative was the Coming One, whom he had been proclaiming. The circumstances that attended the baptism—the dove and the voice—made this impression a conviction. Thus far John had not identified Jesus unequivocally with the Messiah, but now he has no doubt whatever as to the



The River Jordan, near Jericho.

From a photograph.

fact. "John beareth witness of him, and crieth, saying, This was he of whom I said, He that cometh after me is become before me; for he was before me" (Jo. 1:15).

This witness John repeated when a commission from the Sanhedrin came to him to inquire as to his own identity and claims. He was perfectly certain that he himself was not the Messiah, but he was equally clear that he was the herald of the Messiah, whom he had identified with Jesus.

We must remember that up to this time John does not appear to have seen Jesus since the baptism—an interval of about six weeks. It is clear that during this period John had been reflecting upon the impression Jesus had made upon him, and also that the prophecies of Isaiah had been in his thought, for he quotes from them, and refers to them by name in his reply to the Sanhedrin commission (Jo. 1:23). These reflections, and the impression made upon him by the form and countenance of Jesus, who must have been marked by many traces of His long inward struggle, gave a new impulse and insight to John. His ideas about the Messiah were revolutionized in a flash. He had proclaimed that the Coming One was a stern judge (Mt. 3:11, 12); he saw at once that He was far more and other than that. Perhaps there swept before his memory the picture drawn by Isaiah of the suffering Servant. His thought took one of those leaps which only come from a great inspiration. The only incident in the New Testament at all comparable with it is the superb spiritual insight of Simon Peter (Mt. 16:16). The simple words of John's magnificent recognition do not lend themselves to any paraphrase. When we realize the process by which he had gained this apprehension every syllable becomes weighty. "On the morrow he seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! . . . And I have seen, and have borne witness that this is the Son of God" (Jo. 1:29, 34).

One of the noblest things we know of Mahomet is the incident related by Carlyle. "Ayesha, his young favorite wife, a woman who indeed distinguished herself among the Moslem, by all manner of qualities, through her whole long life; this young brilliant Ayesha was, one day, questioning him: 'Now, am I not better than Kadijah? She was a widow, old, and had lost her looks; you love me better than you did

her?'—'No, by Allah!' answered Mahomet. 'No, by Allah! She believed in me when none else would believe. In the whole world I had but one friend, and she was that!'"

In John the Baptist, Jesus found the man who believed in Him, the man who had the spiritual insight to discern His nature and understand His mission. The kingdom of Jesus Christ was founded in the earth on the day when John the Baptist proclaimed that Jesus was the Lamb of God, and the Son of God.

After one great soul had come to believe in Jesus by such ways as we have indicated, the winning of other souls was comparatively easy. In these high spiritual things the gospel narrative fits into human experiences on lower ranges, as the hand fits into the well-worn glove. The testimony of the Baptist led Andrew, and another—perhaps John, the writer of this gospel—to seek Jesus, and to accept His invitation to spend the day with Him. Andrew in turn introduced his brother Simon to Jesus, and then Philip, and Philip in turn Nathanael. How natural it is! How the Evangel fits into the grooves of human relationships, of family ties, of friendly associations, of human acquaintance!

The significant thing, however, in the story, and the one we are so apt to overlook, is that these friends did not impart to each other the conviction that Jesus was the Christ. They left Him to do that. What they did was to bring their friends into relationship with Jesus, so that they might see and hear Him. How easy it was for Him to make His own impression! The two friends spend the day with Him. We do not know a word of the conversation, but we know that the next day Andrew told his brother: "We have found the Messiah." Jesus looked upon Simon and read his character so truly that the man's inner self responded to its Master. Philip needed only a word to attach himself to Jesus. Nathanael was so

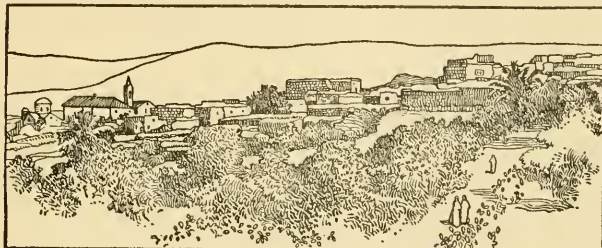
overwhelmed with Jesus' knowledge of him that his conviction gushed forth in a great confession. Jesus did it all. The very least was the work of men.

To-day we often say, Conditions are not the same. We cannot bring men to Jesus to-day, and let Him make His impression upon them. All that men see of Jesus is what is revealed of Him in His disciples. There is some truth in such statements, but not so much as is often supposed. The very best men are poor reflections of the Master. And if the world is to be turned to Christ by the absolute Christ-likeness of the average Christian the enterprise is even more hopeless than the most discouraged have believed. But the truth is that conditions are not essentially different to-day and then. The essential thing, then and now, is that the disciple, while openly confessing his own failure to represent Christ worthily, and lamenting it, should bear an honest, sincere witness as to his own conviction about Christ. And in the secret places of his own heart the man who has been led to seek Christ by a human witness, as Andrew was by the witness of the Baptist, or Philip by the witness of Nathanael, may find Him, and receive his convictions directly from Him. The great function of Christian service is witness-bearing to Jesus Christ, and in that service we are indeed poor Christians if our appreciation of Him and our witness to Him do not far surpass any image of Him shown as yet in our own lives.

The miracle at the wedding feast at Cana, which the Evangelist puts into immediate connection with the impression Jesus made upon those whom their friends introduced to Him, illustrates in at least two ways His attitude toward men. On the one hand, it shows His unselfishness. He who a few days before would not exercise His divine power to transform stones into bread to appease His hunger, transformed water into wine to save His hosts from the chagrin of



having provided insufficient entertainment. And, on the other hand, his readiness to work a miracle for such a purpose conclusively shows the extent and delicacy of His sympathy. It is not surprising that He should exert His divine power to restore Lazarus to the stricken sisters. It would be a hard heart that



**Cana of Galilee.**

The Greek church with the dome on the extreme left of the picture covers the supposed site of the house in which the marriage feast took place.

would not respond to such a call, but, when He wrought a miracle to save his host from the mortification of a failure in etiquette, He manifested a delicacy of sympathy and insight which makes us believe that no human need or even embarrassment is beyond the range of His care. No wonder that John said of this miracle that it "manifested his glory; and his disciples believed on him" (Jo. 2:11).

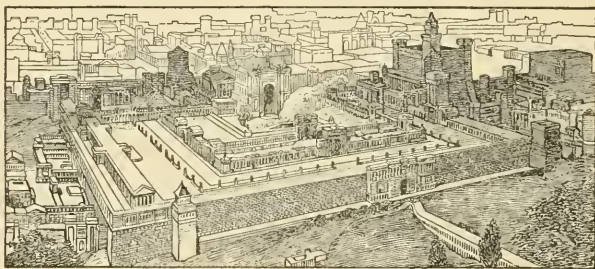
## CHAPTER VII.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE PUBLIC MINISTRY.

Jo. 2:13—3:21.

Thus far the influence of Jesus had been confined to a very narrow, we might almost call it a home circle. The young men who attached themselves to Him were mutual friends, and the miracle at the wedding feast in Cana, at which it appears that the entire group of the relatives and acquaintances of Jesus were present, only appealed to this small company of intimates.

It is always an important day for a young man concerning whose powers his close friends entertain a high estimate, when he goes forth into actual life. He will not find the world so sympathetic and believ-



The Temple Area in the Time of Christ.

From Selous' picture of Jerusalem in its Grandeur.

ing as the home circle has been. He will have to prove his capacity; nothing will be taken on trust. And, if he makes claims for himself, they will be vigorously contested. In the narrative before us we see Jesus, as a young man, going forth into actual life to meet the verdict of the world upon Himself.

After the wedding there seems to have been a kind



of family reunion at Capernaum (Jo. 2:12), and immediately following that, Jesus went up to the great national feast of the passover at Jerusalem. An occasion soon presented itself in which He stood forth as the central figure. There was nothing forced about the situation. What He saw in the temple aroused His indignation, and He could not be true to Himself and refrain from a protest. We need not suppose that there was any intentional sacrilege on the part of the priests in allowing the sheep and oxen for sacrifice, and the tables of the money changers to obtrude into the court of the Gentiles. It was a great convenience to the Jews from a distance to buy their offerings and to exchange their foreign coins near the temple. The encroachment upon the court probably had been gradual, and the slow growth of the custom had blinded the eyes of the authorities to its moral significance. It was an illustration of how easily a practice, perfectly defensible in itself, may become intolerable, because of the way it encroaches upon and supersedes a nobler use. So now business may encroach upon the day of worship, or purely commercial standards upon the sanctities of the home. Jesus felt at once an intense moral revolt against this sacrilegious use of God's house. His conduct in driving out the sheep and oxen, and overturning the tables of the money changers was an act against which even those most seriously affected felt that no protest was possible. They did not attempt to defend the practice, they only questioned His particular authority to institute this necessary reform. The reply of Jesus to this question could hardly have been understood by those to whom it was addressed (Jo. 2:19). His answer was the instant overflowing of His Messianic consciousness. Subsequent events, however, were to make His defense perfectly clear to His disciples and to the world (Jo. 2:22).

The record appears to indicate that the cleansing

of the temple was followed by some "signs" concerning which we are not informed, that inclined many to believe on Him. In the narrative, however, describing the interview with Nicodemus we have a large and deep insight as to Jesus' conception of His mission and the principles that controlled His subsequent action.

It is not necessary to suppose that Nicodemus came to our Lord by night through cowardice. He appears to have been actuated by an honest desire to know more about Jesus before committing himself to His cause. Certainly his subsequent course shows no want of courage (Jo. 7:50,51; 19:39). Jesus struck at once at the heart of the difficulty that a master in Israel would feel as to His message. Nicodemus naturally thought that one who, out of the heart of Judaism, proclaimed the kingdom of God, would be eager to grant special privileges to a man who stood as high as himself in the nation. In the first sentence of Jesus there is a distinct reminiscence of the message of John the Baptist, which Jesus had endorsed by receiving baptism at his hands. John had declared that Abrahamic descent did not qualify one for membership in the kingdom of God, but that personal righteousness, springing out of repentance, was requisite. Now Jesus says that a radical reconstruction of character, such as is implied in the figure of a new birth, is essential. Nicodemus was willing to go back to Abraham for his title to enter the kingdom of God. Jesus said he must go back further than that; he must go back to God. The only heredity that avails in the kingdom of God is an immediate filial relationship to God Himself. Jesus did not attempt to explain the means by which this mighty change was wrought in the souls of men. He compares the action of God's spirit to the movement of the wind. The point of the comparison is the mystery of the wind, not its capriciousness or uncertainty; for

nothing can be more certain than that the air is always in movement, however little we may understand its laws.

And yet, a deeper study of this conversation reveals that Jesus answered the very question that lay behind the thought of Nicodemus. He did not tell him the precise philosophy of the great spiritual change upon which He was insisting—"How can these things be?"—but He did tell him, in no ambiguous words, how he, and all men, might experience this change. He told Nicodemus that the filial relationship to God was formed between a human heart and God, when the soul of man entertained toward Jesus Himself the attitude of loving self-surrender, which is so inadequately represented by our English words "belief" and "believe." Martin Luther used to call the answer of Jesus to Nicodemus "the little Bible." He declared that that single sentence was enough to save the world. What Jesus said was, God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever commits himself in loving surrender to Him might have eternal life. He has just been speaking of a divine life issuing in a new birth. It is mysterious, He has said, but there is nothing capricious or uncertain about it. It is gained by loving self-surrender to Me—the Son of God. Through Me the filial relationship with God is established. The life of God—"eternal life"—enters the human soul, and the soul itself is conformed to the principle of a divine heredity.

Two things especially reward attention in this connection. One is that the claims of Jesus with reference to His own nature become most impressive not when they are explicitly stated, but when, as in this conversation, they are seen to underlie and give consistence to the whole order of thought. Nothing that could be said about Jesus, or that He could say about Himself, could be so impressive as the majestic

assumption that filial relationship to the Most High is effected by loving self-surrender to Jesus.

Another significant thing is that at the very outset of His public ministry the great normative ideas of Jesus about the kingdom of God, His own mission and Himself were distinct and complete. Whatever development there may have been in His thought took place before He entered upon His public work. Indeed, we go back to that conversation with Nicodemus for the clearest light upon some of His later utterances.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### TRUE RELIGION AND TRUE WORSHIP.

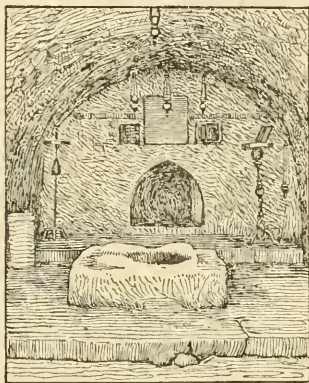
Jo. 3:22—4:42.

Following Jesus' interview with Nicodemus, the Evangelist gives us a glimpse of the state of mind of John the Baptist, now that Jesus was actually entering upon His public ministry. This glimpse is entirely creditable to John. It enhances the high esteem of his character arising from a study of the reports of his sermons and of his previous attitude toward Jesus. Even admitting that the passage Jo. 3:31-35 is a reflection of the author of the gospel rather than a summary of the witness of John, his undoubted testimony to Jesus (3:27-30) indicates penetrating spiritual insight and an absence of self-conceit which are the unfailing marks of a great nature.

The opposition aroused by Jesus' cleansing of the temple, which was sharpened by the increase of His followers (4:1, 2), led Him to withdraw from the neighborhood of Jerusalem, and return to the district of His boyhood. On His way through Samaria to Galilee there occurred an episode which shows how a human soul which at almost every point was in sharp contrast with the spirit of Nicodemus, was led to recognize Him.

Nicodemus, like the merchant seeking goodly pearls (Mt. 13:45, 46), came to Jesus with a clear intent; the woman of Samaria, like the man who found the hidden treasure (Mt. 13:44), met our Lord by accident. Nicodemus was proud of his lineage and position, and probably had led a clean life; the woman of Samaria was an evident sinner, and knew that she had nothing to exult in. There was something a trifle hard and austere about Nicodemus, whose re-

spectability and intellectuality perhaps had alienated him somewhat from a quick sympathy with the ordinary run of human experience; the woman of Samaria, like those who are most tempted through their affections, was responsive to every variation of thought and feeling in those about her. The truth



**The Vault and Mouth of Jacob's Well.**

The mouth of the well is now several feet below the surface of the ground in a small vaulted chamber. The well is now about seventy-five feet deep, although originally it was much deeper.

that Nicodemus needs is the imperative statement of the necessity of a new life: the woman of Samaria knows that through the self-knowledge which has come in scattered moments of reflection. The truth she needs is some knowledge of "the Father" and of His gift that will be like a pure fountain in her heart.

If the author of the fourth gospel had done nothing more than to hang in the gallery of human memory the portrait of the sagacious

and upright master of Israel and of the affectionate and sinful daughter of Samaria, who both came to a recognition of Jesus, he would have rendered an inestimable service to the interpretation of the gospel, and to the promotion of the spiritual life. The types are extreme, and between them there lies the entire range of possible human experience. The universality of the Christian faith hardly needs any other vindication.

The tact and insight of Jesus, and His success in making this woman share His own spiritual elevation, have been generally recognized, not only by

devout Christians, but by students of life and literature. We feel, as we ponder the narrative and come to sympathize with the point of view of Jesus and the woman, and then trace the order of thought and the fluctuations of feeling in both minds, that in Jesus we are brought into contact with a knowledge of the human soul and of God that simply encompasses us. It sweeps so far beneath and over our conceptions that its orbit instead of finding a limitation in our horizon expands it. Countless readers of this chapter have arisen from it asking the question that flew unbidden, through a swift spiritual intuition, to the lips of this woman: "Can this be the Christ?"

And yet, though there is such contrariety in the circumstances, character, and disposition of Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, there is an underlying unity in the message of Jesus to both. He did not tell Nicodemus how the life of God entered a human soul, but He told him that he could gain that life by loving self-surrender to Himself, the Son of God. Through the channel of that relationship to Himself there would flow into his soul the "eternal life." The message to the woman, dissimilar though it was in figure and form, was not different. He spoke to her of the gift of God, a satisfying fountain of eternal life in the heart, which He would give to the one asking for it (Jo. 4:14). There are different metaphors in the two conversations, but the reality is the same.

In our study of the conversation with Nicodemus we saw how there underlies it a majestic assumption as to the nature of Jesus. The same assumption underlies this conversation. In the interview with Nicodemus there is a clear note of the universality of the offer of eternal life (3:16), but in this interview that note sounds, if possible, even more clearly (4:10).

The attempt of the woman to divert the thought



of Jesus into a new channel (4:19, 20) brings into view an unexpected sequence of His message as to the eternal life. Only that worship is acceptable to God which is rendered "in spirit and truth." "The Father" must be worshiped by sons, by those who have the filial spirit, which is the manifestation of the "eternal life" in the soul of man. All questions of time or place or manner are trivial and irrelevant in comparison with the question, Have I the spirit which would make any worship of mine acceptable to God? We can hardly imagine a stronger emphasis upon the inwardness of religion. All forms, ceremonies, places, sink into insignificance in comparison with the utterance of the human heart which has received the "eternal life." The entire value of these externals is dependent upon their serving as media through which the filial heart expresses its adoration of "the Father."

True religion is the "eternal life" in the soul of man; true worship is the expression of that life.



## CHAPTER IX.

### JESUS' OWN VIEW OF HIS MISSION.

Mt. 4:12-17; Mk. 1:14, 15; Lu. 4:14-30; Jo. 4:43-54.

The imprisonment of John the Baptist exerted a strong influence over the course of the ministry of Jesus. On the one hand, in connection with the hostility that had been aroused against Him in Judea, it led Him to withdraw into Galilee, making His headquarters in Capernaum; on the other hand, it led Him to take up the precise message of John—"Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand"—and make it the burden of His preaching (comp. Mt. 3:2 and 4:17), with the significant addition, which Mark has recorded, "and believe in the gospel" (1:15). These facts throw much light upon the genetic relationship between the message of John and that of Jesus. Jesus endorsed the message of John by receiving baptism at his hands, and, when He came to preach, He added His own distinctive contribution to what He had appropriated from His relative and forerunner. From this time the mission of Jesus swings entirely clear from that of John. The message and work of John are incorporated into the ministry of Jesus, who, on the basis of the prophetic teaching of Israel, builds up the majestic fabric of what we know as Christianity.

The sermon in the synagogue at Nazareth completely establishes the correctness of this view. His reading of the famous passage in Isaiah, which was universally construed as Messianic, and His declaration, "To-day hath this scripture been fulfilled in your ears," was not only an implied claim that He was the Messiah, which His hearers appear to have understood perfectly, but it also indicated His own conception of His mission as the Messiah.

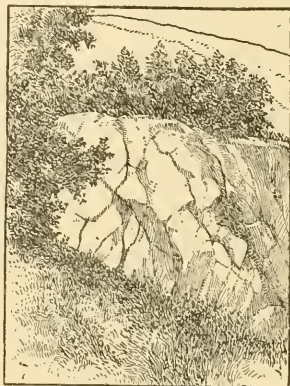
"He anointed me to preach good tidings to the poor:  
He hath sent me to proclaim release to the captives,  
And recovering of sight to the blind,  
To set at liberty them that are bruised,  
To proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."

—Lu. 4:18, 19.

We now see clearly the new strand which Jesus wove with the teaching of the Baptist. John perpetuated the message of Jeremiah and Ezekiel that personal righteousness was the only ground of acceptance with God. Jesus perpetuated the message of Isaiah that God provides for man a redemption which he is not competent to achieve for himself. Both of these messages run through the historic discipline of Israel. The first culminates in the great declaration of the law of Jehovah, the second in the offerings for sin looking forward to the Messianic fulfilment. Jesus emphasized the first as strongly as the Baptist, but He did what the Baptist did not and could not do, He preached a Gospel, a message not of condemnation, but of good tidings (Jo. 3:17). He could declare that a redemption from sin to righteousness, more complete than any commandment keeping, was attainable because of what He Himself could do for man.

The conception of sin which underlies Jesus' announcement of His mission is most important. The quotation from Isaiah shows that He regards it as something foreign to the true nature of man. It is a poverty which deprives him of his rightful resources; it is a captivity which binds his faculties; it is a blindness which closes his eyes and shuts out the whole beautiful world; it is a wound that cripples. And, conversely, the purpose of Jesus is to restore men to themselves; to make the poor rich; to release the captives; to restore sight; to make the cripple whole. In the thought of Jesus His mission is emancipation, restoration, deliverance. The Gospel is glad tidings to those who are poor, captive, blind and crippled by the power of sin.

We have gone a long way in straight thinking about the most important problems of human life when we look at sin and redemption from this point of view of Jesus. Sin does not enrich, expand, or ennoble human life; it makes it poor and small and mean. Sin is acting as we were not made to act. If you bend a finger backward until the joint snaps, you are sinning against the law and nature of that finger. That is what we do with our faculties and powers when we make them the "servants of sin" (Rom. 6: 20). And we put the emphasis where it belongs, and the mission of Jesus in the right perspective, when we see that salvation means power, health and emancipation from all of the forces alien to man's real nature.



**The Cliff at Nazareth.**

One of the sites pointed out as the cliff of precipitation.

But there was more even than this in the discourse at Nazareth. The course of thought seems to be this: Jesus imagines a critic of His claim as saying, "If you are the Messiah do here some of the wonders you are reported to have done at Capernaum." He replies to this demand by citing the incidents in the lives of Elijah and Elisha when they wrought miracles of help for foreigners, though there were many equally helpless and worthy in Israel (1 Ki. 17:8-16; 2 Ki. 5:1-14). This reply reminds us of the teaching of John the Baptist that the blessings of the kingdom are not given by favoritism to a specific people, that Abrahamic descent confers no title to them (Mt. 3:9). Thus Jesus makes His answer to a criticism that was constantly present in the minds of His townsfolk—

who had known Him from youth, and could only associate Him with the village carpenter shop—an implication that His mission is to the whole race of mankind. The “whosoever” of the interview with Nicodemus (Jo. 3:16) is not a mere rhetorical flourish. At the very beginning of His ministry Jesus struck the note of universality, and we hear it clearly again in this early discourse at Nazareth.

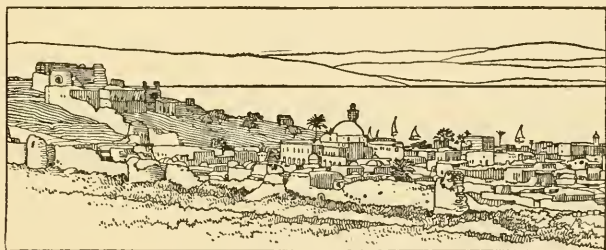
The mission of Jesus, as He conceived it, was to liberate the souls of all men from the captivity of sin.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE EARLY SELF-REVELATION OF JESUS.

Mk. 1:16-45; Lu. 5:1-11.

After Nazareth, the town of the boyhood of Jesus, had rejected Him, He made His headquarters in the rich and populous city of Capernaum, which was situated on the northern shore of the beautiful Lake of Gennesaret. This lake is about thirteen miles long and less than seven wide. The great caravan route from the East to the Mediterranean ran along the northern coast, probably near Capernaum, and several



Tiberias and the Sea of Galilee.

considerable cities and hundreds of villas of wealthy officials and merchants were scattered along its shores.

What might be called the native or Hebrew basis of the population demonstrated in the great struggle with Rome, A.D. 66-70, that it had unusual vigor, courage and devotion. The foreign elements in this region, whether Greek, Roman or Asiatic, represented wealth and culture of no ordinary kind. Altogether Galilee was probably one of the most attractive sections in Western Asia. The people were of sound stock, and the region was a center of a rich and cosmopolitan civilization.

One of the first steps of Jesus after He had established Himself at Capernaum was to select the men who were to be His most intimate companions and helpers in His widening ministry. He naturally turned to the little group of acquaintances He had made a few months before. Some of them were engaged in the fishing industry upon the lake. These He sought out and asked them to attach themselves permanently to Him. The heartiness with which they responded to this request indicates the deep impression He made upon them at the beginning of the acquaintance, an account of which is preserved in Mark's gospel (Mk. 1:16-20).

It is a mistake to represent these disciples, or, for that matter, any of the original Twelve, as vagabonds, or as poor men, representing the proletariat of Galilee. On the contrary, they belonged to the self-respecting middle class which was the backbone of the population, and they came from households that appear to have been comparatively well-to-do. These men may have lacked the social polish that was common among the élite of the Græco-Roman circles of Galilee; like Chalmers and Carlyle they never lost the burr of their mother-tongue (Mk. 14:70) but they were sturdy, sensible and trustworthy.

The effect upon these men of the great catch of fishes which they made by following the directions of Jesus, seems to have been twofold. The fact that they had toiled with all their skill throughout the night fruitlessly, but now, in obeying Him, had been wonderfully successful, taught them in a flash that in abandoning their own resources for His sake they had allied themselves with infinite riches. The more important thing, however, was that Peter saw at once in this surprising event such a disclosure of the divine nature of Jesus that he came to a profound apprehension of his own moral unworthiness. That is the precise connection between the wonderful

catch of fishes and the cry of Peter: "Depart from me; for I am a sinful man, O Lord" (Lu. 5:8). And yet we find that Peter and the rest, "when they had brought their boats to land, . . . left all and followed him" (Lu. 5:11).

How marvelously true this is to the common Christian experience! The disclosure of Christ's nature, which at first repels because it reveals men to themselves in their unworthiness, speaks to something so deep and vital in the human spirit that they cannot go from Him. The first repulsion gives way to an irresistible attraction, and they are glad to leave all and follow Him. Henceforth the four men who shared this experience identified themselves indissolubly with the fortunes of Jesus.

Immediately, perhaps the same day, the ministry of Jesus widened to its full extent in Galilee. The events crowd upon one another. The discourse in the synagogue at Capernaum, during which He made the impression that, in contrast with the religious teachers of the time, who interpreted the words of others, He spoke with original authority (Mk. 1:22); the command to the unclean spirit (vs. 25); the healing of Simon's wife's mother (vss. 29-31), and the restoration to health of many afflicted persons (vss. 32-34) were all events that might have imparted to the people the conviction that had so powerfully impressed Peter and his companions that they had left all to follow Him. But evidently this impression was not made upon the masses. Curiosity, gratitude, and a desire for further benefits were aroused, but not that deeper moral conviction which attaches the soul to Christ. The occurrences of the following days seem to have widened the circle of these emotions (vss. 35-45) without deepening them. The real problem was to make the conviction and experience of Peter and his companions the conviction and experience of all those to whom similar disclosures



were granted. A little later Jesus explained the comparative failure of His mission by a parable drawn from the usual disappointments of farmers (Mt. 13:3-9, 18-23). The point is that the seed tests the soil as truly as the soil tests the seed.

Already, at the very outset of Jesus' ministry, it was becoming evident that teaching and deeds of mercy, even when accompanied by the most remarkable displays of divine authority, were not sufficient to win the deep and permanent allegiance of the masses of mankind. Only the fullest revelation of the divine nature could do that.



## CHAPTER XI.

### THE FIDELITY OF JESUS TO HIMSELF.

Mk. 2:1-22.

Inevitably, the nature, the ideas and the purposes of Jesus led to words and actions that aroused hostility. It was simply impossible for Jesus to be true to Himself and avoid this. There are some differences that no tact or diplomacy can smooth over or obliterate. Such were the differences between Jesus and the ideas and practices of the Roman-Hebrew world of Palestine. These differences probably would have been as marked if He had appeared in the midst of any other civilization, but those which developed in Palestine are thoroughly typical of the antagonism between Jesus and what the writer of the fourth gospel calls "the world," by which he means the organized principles and practices of men.

In Galilee this antagonism to Jesus was based on three grounds, which are vividly brought before us in the second chapter of Mark's gospel (vss. 1-22).

In the first place the leaders of the people, those who by their position and influence set the tone of public opinion, resented at once and bitterly His claim to exercise the divine prerogative to forgive sins. The issue arose naturally in the course of events. When the friends of the paralytic let him down through the roof of the Oriental house into the presence of Jesus, He resolved to give this poor cripple the largest of all blessings. Jesus was very far from teaching that all suffering could be attributed to specific sins (Jo. 9:3), but some diseases certainly can be so traced. And this man's paralysis was probably an instance of that fact. Jesus, therefore, went back of the disease to that of which it was the token, and said, "Son, thy sins are forgiven."

There was nothing strained or forced about this declaration, which indicated, as the scribes at once saw, that He attributed to Himself a divine prerogative. The assumption of Jesus was as congruous to His consciousness as the bestowal of an incredibly large gift would be to the consciousness of the possessor of enormous wealth.

Jesus at once accepted the unspoken challenge. He recognized the soundness of the reasoning of His critics that His declaration to the paralytic was equivalent to an assertion of His own deity. It is so, He said, That is the claim I make; and to vindicate the rightfulness of the claim He healed the paralytic. In the very nature of the case, Jesus' critics could not tell whether His claim to forgive sins was anything more than an empty boast. They had no conceivable tests to apply in that realm, but they could tell whether or not the paralytic had been healed, and the manifestation by Jesus of the divine power in one realm was an evidence that He had the divine prerogative in another. It is not in the least surprising that this claim and its vindication should have aroused against Jesus an unrelenting hostility. He was not the Messiah of whom they had dreamed, and the very conclusiveness of the evidence that He had the prerogative of the Most High embittered them the more.

The hostility that grew out of the relations of Jesus with men on the broad plane of their humanity was equally inevitable. Just as His consciousness of His own nature and power was certain to reveal itself, so was the point of view from which He looked at humanity, and the standard of values by which he appraised men. Under all sorts of civilizations men have estimated their fellows by purely adventitious standards—by their birth, or wealth or supposed wisdom. Under the dominion of these notions men are divided into classes, designated by certain labels,

and are adjudged as worthy or not, according to these distinctions. Jesus' estimate of men was entirely independent of such considerations. He saw the intrinsic worth of the human personality because it was created in the divine image. The usual discriminations that prevail among men were meaningless to Him. When Jesus began to act upon these convictions He was certain to arouse an enormous social prejudice, for there are few things about which men are more sensitive than social distinction. The moment He threw His growing prestige in favor of ignoring social lines He had arrayed against Him in a solid mass all those classes whose peculiar privileges He failed to recognize. The choice of the first disciples did not arouse any prejudice against Him or His ideas; but when He chose Levi, a publican, and attended the supper which apparently Levi gave to his old friends before entering into the closest fellowship with the other disciples, the harm was done (Mk. 2:16). The answer that Jesus made to the rebuke that He violated social conventions (Mk. 2:17) indicates that His interest and sympathy went out in a peculiar way to those who were less privileged.

We can see too that the indifference of Jesus to the mere externals of religion augmented the opposition that grew out of His claims and His democratic temper. It was impossible that He should regulate His own conduct or that of His disciples by the wire-drawn inferences of rabbinic reasoning upon the law. He and they must be free to act from the higher laws that grow out of fresh, vital experiences (Mk. 2:19). A tactful accommodation on the part of Jesus to religious prejudice might have led Him to enjoin fasting upon His disciples, but since Jesus did not believe that the practice had any particular value, He would not take that insincere course. Furthermore, the differences between Jesus and the men of His time were so radical that any attempt to patch

them up would be futile. The new cloth could not be sewn on the old garment to advantage; the old wine-skins were not suitable for the new wine (Mk. 2:21, 22).

Jesus could make very little use of the shrewd, tactful diplomatist with his unbounded faith in adroit concessions and vague phrases. The antagonism between His claims, His ideas of man, and of religion, and the prejudices, principles and practices of the world in which He moved were radical and fundamental. Jesus did not flaunt these differences, but, on the other hand, He did not conceal them. He let the antagonism to Himself develop as it would. He gives us the unsurpassed example of fidelity to oneself.

## CHAPTER XII.

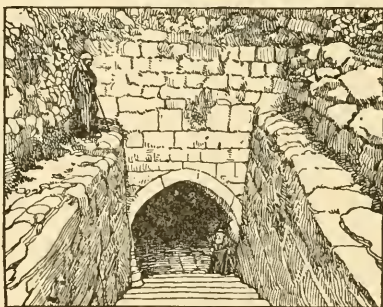
### THE RIGHTS OF THE SOUL.

Mt. 12:1-14; Jo. 5:1-18

The attitude of Jesus toward the Hebrew Sabbath figures very largely in the accounts of the antagonism to Him which finally culminated in His crucifixion. Was this the real cause of the strengthening opposition to Him, or did the leaders of public opinion skilfully use His disregard of the Sabbatic customs of the time as a convenient means of arousing against Him a strong religious prejudice?

The careful student of the narratives will be apt to conclude that there is truth in both the answers these questions suggest. On the one hand, the rulers

acquired a violent and more or less sincere prejudice against Him because of the freedom with which He treated the Sabbath; on the other hand, behind this prejudice, and doubtless contributing strongly to it, was a consciousness that Jesus did not belong to their order; that He represented



From "The Biblical World."

**Entrance to the Virgin's Fountain.**

On the southern slope of the temple mount, and considered by some as the site of the Pool of Bethesda.

a different spirit, a different type of ideas, a different attitude toward life than their own. One manifestation of that difference was the way He treated the Sabbath, but His practice as to the Sabbath was not of itself sufficient to arouse their deadly hostility.

They made so much of this as a handle against Him because His position upon this matter was typical of the real differences between Him and them, and because the charge that He was a Sabbath breaker was a good label to fasten on Him to arouse Jewish prejudice. The general correctness of this position is confirmed by the fact that where they can bring the charge of blasphemy against Him, with some color of excuse, they drop the accusation of Sabbath breaking, and dwell on the new charge. We can actually see the point at which the two charges are coupled and the second becomes predominant (Jo. 5:18).

Three incidents set before us the attitude of Jesus as to the Sabbath. He heals a man with an infirmity at the Pool of Bethesda on the Sabbath day (Jo. 5:1-9); He heals a man with a withered hand in the synagogue on a later Sabbath (Mt. 12:9-13), and He does not condemn His disciples for a violation of the well-understood Sabbath law (Mt. 12:3-8).

Two most important questions arise just here: The first is, why did not Jesus regard the customs and prejudices of the Jews in this matter? Why did He, by His independent course, expose Himself to a criticism that many would regard as just, and give His enemies a handle against Him? Why did He not, as society people would say, show more "tact," and not affront a prejudice? Why did He not, as the literalist interpreters of Paul would say, have regard to the weak consciences of His countrymen?

The moment you seek a real answer to such legitimate questions you are confronted by the fact that the social requirement of tact, or the moral principle of deference to weak consciences has important limitations. The conduct of Jesus perfectly illustrates them. There is a law of independent loyalty to one's own principles which is absolutely supreme over the law of accommodation. There is a limit beyond which

prejudices have no right to lay down the law for the conduct of those who are free from them. There is a point at which the so-called "weak conscience" demonstrates, by the very vigor with which it lays down the law, that it does not belong in the category of the weak.

This consideration throws much light upon an aspect of our Lord's character which has been far too often overlooked. He is the one in whom thorough-going manliness reaches its ideal development. He is the courageous, independent soul because He is self-convinced, knows His own principles, is thoroughly loyal to them and does not shrink from the hostilities that loyalty may provoke. We utterly misinterpret the Christian attitude when we make our Lord's caution against offending "one of these little ones" (Mt. 18:6) an excuse for our cowardice for not bearing manly witness to our convictions. Jesus did not affront the notions of His contemporaries for the sake of showing His independence, but He was independent and submitted to the results of that course, because He must be true to Himself, to His own principles, ideals and mission.

A second important question is this: What was Jesus' doctrine of the Sabbath? A study of the three answers He gave His critics shows clearly that He based His doctrine upon the fact that the purpose of the divine law is the good of man. God does not enjoin the Sabbath law for His own sake. He does not cease in acts of beneficence on the seventh day (Jo. 5:17, 18). There is a gradation in the authority of laws. The Sabbath law must yield to the dictates of human need (Mt. 12:11-13), and to the demands of humanity (Mt. 12:3-7). The unifying principle of these answers is the worth of the human personality to which the law ministers. "The Sabbath was made for man." And the right use of the Sabbath day is to use it for the promotion of the noblest



interests of man. The specific ways in which it shall be used must be left to the Christian perception of the fitness of things, to common sense, to the dictates of the spiritual life. Spiritually minded men will always use it worthily; unspiritual men will be apt to slight its privilege.

The fundamental truth that Jesus enunciates in this connection hardly touches the modern question of Sunday legislation by the civil authority. The principle of the separation of church and state, which is so clearly involved in the teachings of the New Testament, forbids the enactment of Sunday laws on distinctively religious grounds, but it does not forbid the protection of those who would use the day for the highest ends, and, if the state has a right to prohibit child labor, and to fix the hours of organized labor, it has a right to prohibit organized labor on this day. The state may, without trenching upon the functions of the church, secure to every man a day of rest. The way a man uses the day of rest is the outcome of his spiritual life.



## CHAPTER XIII.

### DISCERNING THE LORD.

#### Review of Chapters I-XII.

An ancient Hebrew prophecy had declared that when the Messiah appeared men would not recognize Him (Is. 53:2, 3). Certainly this anticipation was abundantly fulfilled in the career of Jesus. The primary reason why the contemporaries of Jesus failed to discern His nature and office was that they grossly misconceived the realm in which His sovereignty was to be exercised. They were by no means stupid or unresponsive men, but they were misled by their preconception that political, external dominion was the peculiar function of the Messiah. And because all their mental processes started from this false assumption their very devotion to the Mosaic law, as historically interpreted, blinded their eyes to the character of Jesus. This comes out very clearly in the course of the Sabbath controversy which plays such an important part in their rejection of Him. The simple fact that Jesus did not honor the Sabbath as they thought it ought to be honored invalidated His claim in their eyes (Jo. 9:16).

The realm of the Messiah, however, is not primarily that of political or material sovereignties, though these were to be profoundly influenced and ultimately transformed by Him; His realm was that of character, of spiritual experiences, of soul relationships to God. Inevitably, therefore, they sought for the evidences of His Messiahship in the wrong domain. They were like those who would require an artist to demonstrate his power by the tests of mechanics.

Even if the contemporaries of Jesus had apprehended much more adequately the forecasts of the great prophets, it does not follow that they would

have understood Jesus at once, for in our judgments of character, just as in our appreciation of music or painting, we are profoundly influenced by conventional standards. It required the insight of Ruskin to discern and disclose to modern England the superb genius of Turner. Only a delicate moral sense responds to the nobler types of character, if they are uncommon.

But there were some in Palestine who not only had sufficient insight to see that Jesus was a most unusual personality, but who also discerned in Him such a mass and height of moral excellence, dignity and beauty that, to use the words of His latest biographer, they could say, "We beheld his glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth" (Jo. 1:14). The interior clue to the appreciation of the fourth gospel is to bring every incident recorded in it under the light of the question: What, on the one hand, does it contribute to the self-disclosure of Jesus, and what, on the other hand, does it reveal of the processes by which men came to a just apprehension of His personality?

In our studies in the life of Jesus up to the formal choosing of the Twelve, the outstanding features are the blindness of the leaders of public opinion, under the influence of the causes just suggested, to the nature of Jesus, and the profound and happy insight by which a few choice spirits discerned His divine quality. The first to penetrate beneath the popular conventions of the time was Jesus' own relative, John the Baptist. At the very outset of the public ministry John recognized Jesus as the One whose way it was his own mission to prepare. He rose even to a loftier height of spiritual discernment, and declared that Jesus was both "the Lamb of God" and "the Son of God" (Jo. 1:29-34). This witness was the starting point of further recognitions. It did not create them; but it propagated presumptions that made the insights,

to which each person came for himself, the easier. And so we find Andrew and Peter, Philip and Nathanael, and probably John, coming at least to a partial discernment, which was strengthened and clarified when Jesus gave some of them a specific invitation to become His close companions (Mk. 1:16-20). Through the miraculous draft of fishes (Lu. 5:1-11) there seems to have flashed upon the minds of Peter and his companions a fresh and vivid revelation of the majestic personality of Jesus. The incident reminds one of that unsurpassed passage in Browning:

“ I stood at Naples once, a night so dark  
I could have scarce conjectured there was earth  
Anywhere, sky or sea, or world at all;  
But the night's black was burst through by a blaze,  
Thunder struck blow on blow, earth groaned and bore  
Through her whole length of mountain visible;  
There lay the city thick and plain with spires,  
And, like a ghost dis-shrouded, white the sea.  
So may the truth be flashed out by one blow.”

The case of Nathanael illustrates another type, and it is of extreme interest. He seems to have been a spiritually minded man, though his preconceptions and prejudices were all averse to Jesus, but the disclosure of Jesus' knowledge of a trivial event wrought a sudden change in his convictions, and his clarified insight registered itself in a confession that is worthy of a place beside the consummate utterance of Simon Peter (Jo. 1:49; Mt. 16:16). We can trace the development of Peter's faith; Nathanael's was the product of an instant. Still further, the experience of Nicodemus and of the woman of Samaria illustrate a recognition of Jesus gained through a very full self-disclosure on His part.

It is not clear to what extent those whom Jesus healed during this period apprehended His personality. Probably their ideas were confused. The important thing for us to notice is that the men who

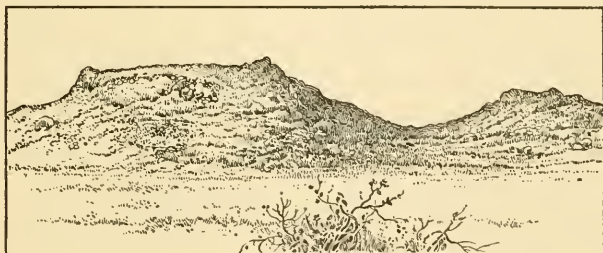
had the insight to recognize Him became the human founders of His kingdom. It is this recognition accompanied by loyalty to it which fills up the meaning of the great and mysterious word "faith."

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE SOCIETY OF JESUS.

Mk. 3:7-19a.

The term "Society of Jesus" is the title of the most admired, most hated, and most powerful organization in the Roman church. But the use of this name by Loyola, and the sinister associations that have clustered about it, should not blind us to the fact that it is one of the happiest designations of the Christian church, which is "a company and fellowship of faithful and holy people gathered in the name of Jesus Christ." In our Lord's appointment of the Twelve we have the nucleus of the historic Christian



From "Lesper photographs," copyright, 1912

#### The Horns of Hattin.

The traditional place of the choosing of the Twelve and the Sermon on the Mount.

church, and the ends for which He gathered this society are the objects for which the church exists, namely, that its members may be developed in the Christian life, and that individually and collectively they may be the agents for diffusing that life. The means, too, by which the Twelve and the church accomplish their purposes are the same, namely, knowledge of Jesus, gained through His word and

personal fellowship with Him, and obedience to His commands.

About four months had elapsed since Jesus had summoned Peter, Andrew, James and John to leave all and follow Him. During those months many things had taken place. Jesus had wrought a series of miracles in Capernaum (Mk. 1:21-34); He had made a preaching tour of Galilee (Mk. 1:35-45); He had healed the paralytic (Mk. 2:12) and called Matthew to join the four previously chosen (Mk. 2:13-17). He had restored the infirm man at the Pool of Bethesda (Jo. ch. 5), and the man with a withered hand (Mk. 3:1-6), and He had engaged in the critical controversies about fasting and the Sabbath (Mk. 2:18-22; 3:1-6).

At the time when He added seven intimate companions to the five already chosen He was so widely known throughout the whole country that great crowds pressed about Him wherever He went (Mk. 3:7-12), and the antagonism on the part of the higher ecclesiastics had so far developed that they had half formed a purpose—not to kill Him, that was a later development—in some way or other to put Him out of the way. It was evident that if the influence of Jesus was to be concentrated and perpetuated it must be through the organization of a larger number of companions who should get His full thought, catch His spirit and act with some degree of unity. The way Jesus met the emergency was to add seven to the five companions He already had. He lived with these friends and taught them much that He withheld from the crowds. He also suggested their future work, and gave them practice by sending them out on short preaching trips.

The seven men who thus made up the full complement of the Twelve were not the equals in ability or character of the five previously chosen. Peter and John were men of real genius. There were rock-

like elements in the former, in spite of his superficial waywardness and vacillation. If Peter wrote the first epistle attributed to him, and John is responsible for the fourth gospel, both men had literary power of the very first order. James had a certain combination of energy and passion with steadfastness, and Matthew appears to have had all the characteristics of a first-rate man of affairs. The first five were not to be despised in any list of the world's effective men. The second group of seven did not belong in the same class. They were simply sensible, good-hearted, average men. They belonged to the order of the two-talented, who make up the majority of any community, and are the substratum of ordinary civilized society. We must not, however, fall into the error of thinking of them as "unlearned and ignorant men." That was the characterization of a group of supercilious officials who thought that their technical knowledge was the only education worth having (Acts 4:13). It has always been difficult to find a Jew who was "ignorant" in the modern sense, and certainly there were no ignorant Jews in Palestine during the first half century of our era. Perhaps at that time there were few provinces of the Roman Empire which enjoyed so generous and widely diffused a culture as Palestine.

Still, though it is not entirely easy from the point of view of worldly wisdom to justify the choice of the seven, we can see some reasons for Jesus' course, and it was magnificently vindicated by the event.

For one thing, the qualities of human nature that are essential to make men effective agents in the diffusion of the Christian life are not the more brilliant and showy endowments, but sincerity, common sense, and a certain integrity of mental and spiritual constitution. In the apostolic band there was a Peter and a John. The annals of Christian history are studded with names that represent superlative



genius and equipment. There have always been noble preachers, effective administrators, learned theologians, inspiring teachers and heroic missionaries. But the roads along which the Christian life has advanced have been the ways of ordinary human relationships. The wholesome ties of family life, of neighborhood association, of business connection, have been the channels through which the honest heart, the firm conviction, the pure life have touched another life, and interpreted and commended the Gospel. A religion that could not take the average man and make him its preacher, even from the point of view of ordinary worldly forecast, had no likelihood of becoming a universal faith. A religion that can make both the group of five and the group of seven its effective heralds is stamped with the mark of universality.

And how effectively the very composition of the Twelve taught the great primal lesson of brotherhood through a common relationship with the Master! These two groups, with all their peculiar differences, are mingled in the Twelve, and then we have such a contrast as that between the believing Nathanael and the doubting Thomas, or that between Matthew, the tax-gatherer, and Simon Zelotes, a fanatical hater of taxes and tax-collectors. Is there any power that will bring men to a recognition of their essential brotherhood, and then make the fact interpretative of their duties and inspire a readiness to perform them? That is a question that all Western civilization, with its clash of interests and parties and traditions, is asking to-day more urgently than ever. Does not the brotherhood which Jesus organized of men of such different types and endowments and préjudices, which He unified in a common relationship to Himself, suggest the only sufficient answer?



## CHAPTER XV.

### WHAT IS RIGHTEOUSNESS?

Mt. ch. 5.

The choosing of the Twelve was naturally followed by our Lord's clear, detailed, definite statement of His leading ideas and purposes. This exposition is the so-called "Sermon on the Mount." It was spoken to the disciples, possibly only to the Twelve, but the truths it expressed were universal in their range. They are the principles of the kingdom of God.

We have observed that the significance of the baptism of Jesus at the hands of John was that it was Jesus' personal acceptance and endorsement of the message of John. That message was that title to membership in the kingdom of God is personal righteousness springing out of repentance. As we have seen, in studying the conversation with Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria, Jesus did not stop with the message of John. He built on it a noble structure; but after all, the message of John was the foundation of all His conceptions, and it is through Jesus' adoption of this message that His own career is linked with the long line of Hebrew prophets from the days of Moses. The noblest utterances of the prophets, the message of the last and greatest of them, John the Baptist, and the teaching of Jesus find a point of unity in the truth that title to the kingdom of God depends on personal righteousness.

Now "righteousness" is one of those vague terms to which different minds attach very different notions. It was, therefore, of the utmost importance that Jesus should clear this term of all false and superstitious and unworthy interpretations. That is just what the Sermon on the Mount does. It is an exposition of what Jesus means by "righteousness."

The introduction to this exposition consists of the "Beatitudes" (Mt. 5:3-12), which are specific reaffirmations of the principle that the title to the kingdom is personal righteousness. Those who are conscious of their need (the poor in spirit); those to whom their needs and the needs of others are a grief (the mourners); those who in trouble maintain their equanimity (the meek); those who long for righteousness; the merciful; the pure in heart; the peacemakers; the persecuted for righteousness' sake—these are the members of the kingdom; they have true blessedness; they find their needs met; they inherit the earth; they obtain mercy; they see God; they are called the sons of God; theirs is the kingdom of heaven. In this original and graphic way Jesus expounds and enforces the truth for which John the Baptist stood, that the title to the kingdom is personal righteousness. But how vital and searching and lovely the idea of righteousness is becoming under the touch of the mind of Jesus!

But before Jesus proceeds to the main exposition His thought is arrested by a consideration that appeals to us at once. What a place this world would be if the people in it had the characteristics of which He has just been speaking! And then, with a magnificent optimism, He looks at the men who are of this sort, and He says to them, "Ye are the salt of the earth, . . . ye are the light of the world." That is your task, to save the world from putrefaction and darkness. And it is no hopeless enterprise. The unshaded light illuminates the whole room. Darkness has no chance before a ray of light. It is at once vanquished. How are the members of the kingdom to transform the earth? The answer of Jesus is quite simple, but perhaps it is more profound than sometimes we have imagined: "Let your light shine before men that they may see your beautiful deeds (literal translation), and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

Jesus has not come to anything like a full exposition of His idea of righteousness, but even thus far He has said enough to suggest that His teaching is different from that of the law and the prophets. He meets that suggestion by a flat denial. He says, "I am not destroying, but I am fulfilling. The law and the prophets are of eternal significance and worth. They are not the product of human contrivance or imagination; they are the expression of the constitution of things. Heaven and earth may pass away as readily as the moral requirements. Greatness in the kingdom of heaven will depend upon the fidelity with which one obeys the law of righteousness in conduct and word" (Mt. 5:17-19).

The discourse now advances to the specific development of the great theme: What is righteousness? The rest of the fifth chapter of Matthew (vs. 21-48) is occupied with a series of contrasts between current Jewish conceptions and the teachings of Jesus. These contrasts touch murder, adultery, divorce, oaths, retaliation and resistance, and love of others. The significant feature of the teaching of Jesus as to these matters is its inwardness. With Him righteousness does not consist in outward conformity to certain rules or conventions; it consists in the rectitude of the thought and feeling that lie behind the outward act, out of which it springs. This not only applies a searching test to specific acts, but it enormously enlarges the range of acts which are to be judged. No schedule of deeds has a mesh fine enough to capture all life. The teachings of Jesus, that the motive and impulse behind all acts measure them, brings the whole of life under the demand for righteousness.

As Jesus proceeded His hearers must have felt, as we feel when we read His words thoughtfully, that He has made "righteousness" so difficult that it is well-nigh impossible. His idea of righteousness makes it nothing less than perfection, and that not the per-

fection of man, but the perfection of the heavenly Father (Mt. 5:48).

We sometimes hear critics of historical Christianity say, "I stand on the Sermon on the Mount; if we follow out its teachings that is all we need; the Sermon on the Mount is good enough for me." Yes, the Sermon on the Mount is not only good enough for us, but it is good enough for God. What man who ever lived will stand justified by its exacting requirements? And when men say, "That is all we need; that is religion enough for me," they are like a girl who sees the Koh-i-Noor at Windsor Castle and says, "That is all I need; that is good enough for me."

## CHAPTER XVI.

### THE MOTIVE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Mt. chs. 6, 7.

The Sermon on the Mount is an ellipse. Its foci are the counsel of perfection (Mt. 5:48) and the Golden Rule (7:12). Both foci are determinative of the curve which bounds it. The problem, therefore, of analyzing it is not so simple as if it were a circle, described from one point. It has something of the complexity of actual life, which is never swayed by a single force. In a broad way, however, we may assert that the first part, which is chiefly devoted to the nature of righteousness, leads up to the command to be perfect like the heavenly Father; while the second part (chs. 6, 7), which is principally devoted to an exposition of the motive to righteousness, culminates in the precept to do to others as we would have them do to us.

After Jesus has explained that the essence of righteousness is the filial relationship of man to God, He proceeds to show how this spiritual, vital fellowship, on the one hand, protects men from the evils that are inseparable from an external and formal righteousness; and, on the other hand, inspires those activities which bring life into conformity with the divine ideal.

With peculiar insight Jesus discriminates the three outstanding perils of conventional righteousness. The first is putting the approbation of men in the place of the approval of God. Public opinion may be a great force for righteousness. Probably it influences most good men far more than they imagine. They want to set a good example, not to bring discredit upon their profession, or to be admired for their devotion. But the righteousness that has no

deeper root than these motives is a frail thing. It is only the soul that loves the praise of God more than the praise of men that has the reality of righteousness. Jesus applied this principle to the three observances which His contemporaries regarded as the chief elements of religion—to almsgiving (Mt. 6:2-4), to prayer (vss. 5, 6), and to fasting (vss. 16-18). The dominating idea in each of these discussions is that the secret, inward, personal relationship of the soul of man to God is the only thing that gives significance to these acts. In other words, the worth of religious observances is not in their influence upon our fellows, but in their power to bring our own souls into fellowship with God. And when men do acts of piety for the sake of impressing their fellows, their religion becomes unreal and ostentatious. Men are won to God by the "beautiful deeds" of disciples (Mt. 5:16), not by witnessing their distinctively religious acts.

Another peril of formal, rule-observing religion is its double-mindedness. When a man does not have the sense of vital, sympathetic relationship to God,



**Anemone Coronaria.**

This is a beautiful red flower very common in Palestine. It is thought to be the "lily" referred to by Christ in Mt. 6:28, 29.

and his religion is simply commandment-keeping, he will be thinking part of the time of himself, and part of the time of God. His attitude will be: So much of time, strength, attention, treasure for myself, and so much for God. Laying up treasure upon earth will be supremely important, for who is to take care of him if he does not look out for himself? Inevitably such a man becomes selfish, double-minded, and harassed by anxieties. Over against this picture, which is quite as true to life in our own days as

it was to that of the first century in Judea, Jesus puts the disciple whose righteousness springs out of intimate personal fellowship with the heavenly Father. Such a disciple will be emancipated from the self-seeking, the cross-purposes and the solicitude to which the formalist is always subject (Mt. 6:25-34).

A third evil of external religion is that it is unsympathetic and censorious. The mote in another's eye becomes a chief concern. No one is really competent to pass a judgment upon another's conduct. He does not have the data, and he lacks the proper temper. But this is the favorite business of the formalist. Like the Pharisee in the temple, he cannot keep it even out of his prayers (Lu. 18:9-14). Of course there are discriminations based on simple common sense. It is too often forgotten that the command not to give that which is holy to dogs, or to cast pearls before swine, which implies a palpable act of judgment, stands in immediate connection with the prohibition of judging. The dictates of spiritual religion do not violate common sense and the fitness of things. But over against the censorious hypocrite Jesus places the son and the father. In dealing with those who are in spirit His sons, the heavenly Father first of all regards the fact of sonship, not the minutiae of desert (Mt. 7:7-12). In this great passage we have the germ of the transcendent Christian doctrine of grace. We should not forget that the Golden Rule immediately follows. The Golden Rule does not stand by itself. It is an inference, "All things, therefore," from the preceding exposition. This fact gives it a unique character. There are close parallels to the Golden Rule in Plato and in Confucius. Prof. Legge, the eminent professor of Chinese at Oxford, and a devout Christian, believes that we must concede that Confucius stated the Golden Rule affirmatively, like Jesus, as well as negatively. But what neither Plato nor Confucius did, was to connect this rule for human conduct with the action of God, and



to enunciate the ultimate law of human life, that man should act in the little sphere of his experience according to the same principles, by the same methods, for the same end that God acts in the vast ranges of His being. It is interesting to observe that the counsel of perfection (Mt. 5:48), and the Golden Rule (7:12) rest upon identical grounds.

But the question now arises: If filial relationship to God is the heart of righteousness, may not this very confidence in God rob men of the incentives to moral action? Jesus has already answered that question by pointing out that the Father's care leaves them free to devote their energies to the things most worth while—so that with a single mind they may seek first the kingdom of God (Mt. 6:33). The realm of duty, according to Jesus, is the realm of liberty; and in that realm man is free and responsible. Jesus applies this principle in three ways. He urges the necessity of vigorous action (Mt. 7:13; comp. Lu. 13:24), of vigilant circumspection (Mt. 7:15-20), and of actual obedience (Mt. 7:21-27). No matter what we may say about the resources of the land, or the rewards of industry, food and raiment largely depend on forces beyond the control of man. Trust in God relieves us from over-anxiety about these things, but righteousness depends on our whole-hearted choices, upon our moral energy, upon actual obedience. On the one hand, trust in God for daily bread and all that it stands for emancipates the life of the spirit from the bondage of the material; on the other hand, trust in God, the sense of living fellowship with Him, is the mighty incentive for doing His will. He who said, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures, . . . be not therefore anxious," also said, "Strive to enter in by the narrow door." And He who made trust in God the burden of His great discourse closed it by exhorting men to obey God, for He knew that there cannot be obedience without trust, or trust without obedience.

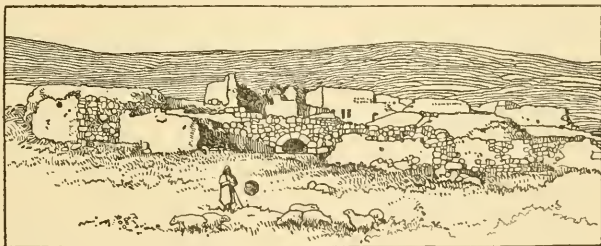


## CHAPTER XVII.

### THE EVIDENCES OF THE MESSIAH.

Lu. 7:1-35.

Immediately after Jesus had chosen the first four disciples He took them through Galilee on a short tour of preaching and healing. After His selection of the Twelve, and the course of instruction contained in the Sermon on the Mount, He accompanied them on a similar journey. The purpose of these tours was not only to proclaim the good tidings of the kingdom, but also to bring the disciples into actual contact with human life. The medical student



Modern Nain.

does not become a well equipped physician by reading books or by attending lectures; he must have the practice of clinics. Theological students need something more than courses in theology, exegetics and history; they must bring the truth they win from these studies into actual relation with present problems. These journeys of Jesus with His disciples gave them clinical experience.

Luke selects out of the many occurrences of this tour two events that are thoroughly typical—the healing of the centurion's servant (Lu. 7:2-10) and

the raising from the dead of a widow's son (Lu. 7: 11-17). The contrasts between these works of mercy impress every reader. The first was wrought upon one at a distance, the second upon one at hand; the first involves a supernatural knowledge as well as power; the second carries the demonstration of power to an extreme limit; the first was wrought in response to a faith that surpassed any that Jesus had found in Israel (Lu. 7:9); the second was not wrought in response to any faith at all, it sprang wholly out of the compassion of Jesus (Lu. 7:13). These contrasts enable us to picture imaginatively the activities of Jesus. His helpfulness was as varied, and His resources as ample as these contrasts would suggest. Matthew leads us to suppose that the moral effect of the Sermon on the Mount was overwhelming (Mt. 7:28, 29). The impression made upon the Twelve who witnessed this series of events, taken in connection with the sermon, must have begotten in their hearts deep and strange convictions.

We are now prepared to appreciate the episode which followed. At this juncture two disciples of John the Baptist arrived with the question of their master, "Art thou he that cometh, or look we for another?" The Greek word translated "another" means another kind of person. The question of John involves doubt, not merely as to the Messiahship of Jesus, but as to the Messiahship of any one like Jesus. The skepticism of the Baptist is fundamental and radical. He doubts whether the Messiah is any such person as Jesus is showing Himself to be. His doubt extends to the whole program of Jesus—His principles and purposes and methods. Many expositors shrink from carrying out the evident implications of John's question. Some even go so far as to suggest that John sent his disciples to Jesus to confirm their faith, not to put his own doubt at rest. Such subterfuges will not do. The words should be taken at their

face value. John, in the dungeon of Machærus, where he had been imprisoned by Herod, and where he was awaiting death, reviewed his whole career. Was it possible that he had been deceived by that flash of insight which led him to declare that Jesus was the Lamb of God and the Son of God (Jo. 1:29, 34)? In view of the different program and temper of John from the course of Jesus, and especially in view of the apparent ruin of his own life-work, and the success of Jesus, the question, with all its skepticism, was thoroughly natural and human. It is wholesome for us to remember that unquestionably great men in the moral realm often walked in the darkness by dim and flickering lights. The touching thing about this incident is that John sent his friends to Jesus to ask of Him this searching, personal question. That betrays his fundamental confidence in Jesus. He believes that Jesus will tell him the truth. The relations between two friends, no matter how they may be strained by doubts and misunderstandings, are thoroughly sound and noble, when the one whose confidence is disturbed can yet go to the other, and say, I do not want to know what any third party says or thinks, I only want to know what you yourself say. That is precisely what John the Baptist did. And those who read this episode understandingly rise from it with a new appreciation of a great soul.

The reply of our Lord to the Baptist's question brought close home to the representatives of John the evidence that was making such deep impression upon the minds of His own disciples (Lu. 7:21-23). Undoubtedly John would recognize this course of Jesus as corresponding with the Messianic ideal (Is. 61:1). It might be difficult for him to revise his own program (Mt. 3:10-12), but the beatitude with which Jesus closed His reply (Lu. 7:23) involves a delicate suggestion that John should view the work

of Jesus without prejudice, and conform his Messianic outlook to a truer perspective.

The query arises, why did not Jesus, who had been moved by compassion to raise the widow's son from the dead, exercise His power in delivering His relative and friend and forerunner? One answer, and probably the true one, is that John did not need compassion. The outward circumstances of John were about as depressing as they could be, but, no matter what the circumstances, a true, courageous man who is suffering for his loyalty to the truth, is not the one whom we should pity. Such a man takes the pity men give him, and hands it back, and will not have it. That is exactly what Jesus did a few months later (Lu. 23:28). There is a profound reason why the compassion of Jesus was not stirred for John the Baptist as it was for the widow of Nain.

Would it have comforted John to know what Jesus thought of him (Lu. 7:24-29)? Perhaps so, but after all that great soul did not need it, and the martyr's crown is the brighter because he did not know it. But the disciples of Jesus needed it, and the world needed it. After the friends of the Baptist had departed, Jesus uttered the most appreciative eulogium upon the lonely prisoner of Machærus that ever fell from His lips. Men and women to-day do not always know what Jesus Christ thinks of them. The events of life go hard with them. They experience poverty, sickness, bereavement, the blasting of cherished hopes. They are like the prisoner in Herod's castle, and no sympathetic word or help comes from the Christ in whom they have believed. One of the great rewards of the future for the loyal followers of Christ will be to know exactly what He thinks of them.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### THE THREE ATTITUDES OF MEN TOWARD JESUS.

Mk. 3:19b-35; Lu. 7:36—8:3.

During the second preaching tour of Jesus the attitude of His contemporaries toward Him began to take definite form. The aged Simeon had prophesied of Jesus in His childhood that He would be the touchstone of human hearts (Lu. 2:35). Now that forecast began to be fulfilled. Men and women who came in contact with Jesus were rapidly led to take different positions toward Him. These positions were largely determined by their characters, dispositions, and spiritual affinities. Because of this, the way Jesus affected them revealed—all unconsciously to themselves—"the thoughts of many hearts."

In the conduct of the sinful woman at Simon's feast (Lu. 7:37,38) we have a vivid illustration of the grateful, adoring love to Him which sprang up in a soul that had come to have faith in Him. It has been conjectured that this woman may have been a guest at Levi's farewell dinner (Lu. 5:29) where she had seen and heard Jesus, and a wide tradition has identified her, though it may be unjustly, with Mary Magdalene. Dante Gabriel Rossetti's etching, "Magdalene," has never been exhibited or reproduced, for reasons personal to the artist, which those who are familiar with Rossetti's home life will at once appreciate. One who saw this etching says that it represents the woman whom Luke describes in the street of a city, with a throng of merrymakers—she the fairest of them all. Her face has the beauty and the fascination of the loveliest of human



An Alabaster Vase.

countenances. But Rossetti has not pictured her in her thoughtless triumph. From an open window looking upon the street she has seen a face that makes her pause; the eyes of Jesus have met hers. She is ascending the few steps leading to the house of Simon the Pharisee. The laugh has died upon her lips; she is tearing the crown of flowers from her golden hair; she is flinging her ornaments into the street; she does not heed the youths who seek to restrain her; she turns away forever from her gay companions, who stand stricken with wonder.

“ ‘ Oh, loose me! See'st thou not my Bridegroom's face  
That draws me to Him? For His feet my kiss,  
My hair, my tears He craves to-day;—and oh!  
What words can tell what other day and place  
Shall see me clasp those blood-stained feet of His?  
He needs me, calls me, loves me: let me go! ’ ”

—*Rossetti.*

The look of Jesus has awakened within her soul some sense of the beauty of holiness, and of the possibility and wonder of redemption. Faith in Him has arisen in her heart, and in the light of that faith we can understand the beautiful story of her adoration of the Master in the Pharisee's house.

Probably a larger number than we would at first suppose from a cursory reading of the gospel came to this attitude of faith in Jesus. The nobleman in Capernaum, who, with all his family, believed because of the son whom Jesus had healed, and the women who attended Jesus on this second tour (Lu. 8:2, 3) represented a somewhat numerous class.

A second attitude toward Jesus is typified by Simon the Pharisee. His position is perfectly well defined. The opposition of the ecclesiastical party, to which Simon belonged, had become very intense, but Simon did not share this sentiment. On the contrary, he was disposed to take a broad-minded,

tolerant view of Jesus and of the whole situation. He would even go so far as to extend to Jesus the courtesy of an invitation to dinner, a proceeding that would give rise to much sharp criticism among his brother Pharisees. But Simon was careful not to go too far in these courtesies. He left undone a few of the delicate attentions which would show that he welcomed Jesus on the basis of hearty friendship and social equality. He did not provide the usual conveniences for washing the feet, and he offered no kiss of welcome. The conduct of Simon is not free from a tinge of patronage and social condescension. There were many things about Jesus that he liked, and he would wish to know Him better; but he could not go to the length of opening his heart and home to Him, and welcoming Him on the basis of sincere, unreserved, loyal friendship. The attitude of Simon was probably not the common one. He seems to have stood almost alone in it, but, throughout the Christian centuries, his attitude has been typical of the relation of multitudes to Jesus. Perhaps it is the prevalent attitude of the so-called "modern" mind. Jesus is not rejected; His claims are not disallowed. On the contrary, they are examined with an intelligent curiosity, and He is admitted to be a thoroughly estimable character, who merits consideration and hospitality. In short, the attitude of these persons toward Jesus is precisely that of Simon. They welcome Him to a certain extent; they do not oppose Him, but they adopt a course that is more offensive than opposition; they patronize Him.

The scribes typify another attitude. Many sentiments were mingled in their bitter hostility to Jesus. Undoubtedly they were moved to a small extent by devotion to the Mosaic law, which they believed that Jesus disparaged, but their view of the law was so hard, narrow and unspiritual that this motive is not entitled to much respect. What really influenced

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them seems to have been a love of their position, with its emoluments, consideration and privilege. They embodied the worst vices of office-holders, whether ecclesiastical or civil. The besetting temptation of such men is to regard their positions as vastly more important than truth, justice, or the common welfare. The "scribes" were probably right in their forecast that if Jesus were permitted to continue His work their own privileges were doomed. Their attitude is thoroughly representative of the course of those in every age, who have opposed Jesus because they have been aware that His triumph was inimical to their selfish interests. Those interests may be their sensual desires, their unjust practices, or their disproportionate and unmerited privileges.

The pursuance of evil desires is apt to reveal appalling abysses in human nature. The evil desire involves means for its accomplishment that hardly would have been dreamed of at first, but which the desire appropriates and approves. The unholy ambition of Macbeth drags after it Duncan's murder. The self-interest of the scribes, untouched by any noble consideration, drags after it that astounding charge that Jesus was in league with Satan (Mk. 3:22).

As we look into this record of the attitude of men toward Jesus when He was on earth, we cannot fail to see in it permanent and eternal features. As with the point of a graver's burin we see delineated here the relationship of the men and women of to-day—our own relationship—to Jesus Christ.



## CHAPTER XIX.

### AN EXPOSITION OF THE KINGDOM.

Mt. 13:1-53; Mk. 4:26-29.

Immediately after the representatives of the ecclesiastical party at Jerusalem had charged Jesus with being in league with Satan He changed the method of His teaching. Heretofore He had spoken with a plainness and directness which made His meaning unmistakable. From this point He made a large use of parables, which, to a certain extent, veiled His teachings in the minds of those who lacked spiritual insight. Several considerations led Jesus to adopt this method. It lessened the irritation and consequent opposition which the previous method had aroused. The multitude understood what met the ear without apprehending all its implications and suggestions. They were prevented from fully understanding that they might not misunderstand. Again, the very capacity to apprehend His teachings sifted His followers. Few better tests could have been applied to the future preachers of the truths of the kingdom than that of spiritual insight (Mk. 4:24). Furthermore, no more effective way could have been devised for lodging the truth permanently in the souls of men. A proposition, no matter how precisely worded, is soon forgotten. A story that embodies the truth lingers long in the memory and, if it has human interest, is associated in many ways with the experiences of life. Though the full import of such a story may not be at first apprehended, it is present in the memory to reveal its significance when reflection, the emergencies of life, or the growth of spiritual appreciation prepare the way (Mk.4:22).

Matthew, with much skill, has grouped our Lord's parables of the kingdom into a progressive series,

which is characterized by a fine literary unity. The first parable, commonly called The Sower, portrays the origin of the kingdom in the word of God (Mk. 4:14) and the way the fruitage of the word in human life is dependent upon the disposition and environ-

ment of those to whom it comes (Mk. 4:15-20). The interesting question at once arises whether or not the individual is wholly responsible for the conditions which determine the fate of "the word" in his own heart. The plain inference from the teaching of the parable is that while his responsibility is not complete, it is sufficient to make him, in a measure, accountable for the result. If Satan had had no previous welcome he could not take away "the word which had been



From "Leeper photographs," copyright, 1902.

**Path through the Fields.**

Illustrating the wayside hearer.

sown"; if the cares of the world and the false attractions of riches had not beguiled the spirit, the word would not have been choked. This is in accord with a clear, but frequently disregarded teaching of Jesus, that a man's acceptance or rejection of Him is often determined by his previous attitude toward the dictates of righteousness (Jo. 3:20, 21; 16:9).

But this kingdom, which springs out of the response of the individual soul to the word of God, exists in two spheres—in that of the soul of the individual, and in that of the organized life of the time. It exists in the heart of the disciple, and it exists in the world. The teaching of the parable of the tares in the field is twofold; that the kingdom as a world-fact is of a mixed nature—tares are mingled with

the wheat—and that violent methods of uprooting acknowledged evils may be hurtful to the good. The kingdom in the sphere of the individual life does not tolerate evil; the kingdom as a world-force exists in the midst of evil; it repudiates drastic methods of dealing with evil, and it waits for the final complete triumph of the good “until the harvest.”

If we add to the parables of the mustard seed (Mt. 13:31, 32) and of the leaven (Mt. 13:33) that of the growing seed (Mk. 4:26-29), we have Jesus' full thought as to the expansion of the kingdom. It goes back to the smallest beginnings; it progresses through its silently penetrating and transforming power, and it is marked by the irresistible energy of a vital process.

The parables of the hid treasure and of the merchant seeking pearls illustrate the ways in which men come into the kingdom. A man walking over a field, thinking of other things, happens upon a hidden treasure. The parable reminds us of the way the kingdom came to the woman of Samaria. She went out to draw water, and she found the “water of life.” On the other hand, we have the trader in jewels traveling here and there of set purpose seeking the choicest pearls. He reminds us of Nicodemus, who came deliberately to Jesus, honestly seeking spiritual life. The common point in the two parables is the way the man walking in the field and the merchant treated what they found. They had a sense of values. As we say in common speech, “they knew a good thing when they saw it.” Their appreciation of their discoveries revolutionized their perspectives. The treasure and the pearl became of transcendent worth. Their possessions looked so mean and small that they at once sold them all, in order to acquire the thing of supreme value. The kingdom comes to men in different ways, but all those who enter it have this characteristic—they see its worth and subordinate all other considerations to its demands.

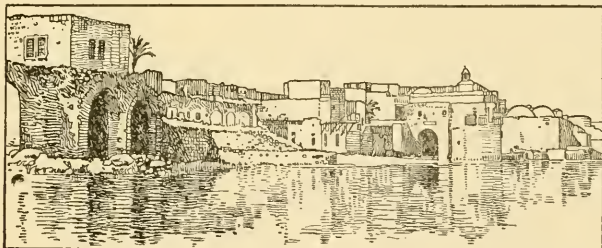
In the last parable of the series (Mt. 13:47-50) Jesus reinforces His interpretation of a feature of the parable of the tares (Mt. 13:41, 42). The mixed nature of the kingdom is not permanent. Human history and the evolution of the kingdom are moving toward the climax of separations. In both parables the significant phrase occurs, "So shall it be in the end of the world" (Mt. 13:40, 49). That is Jesus' forecast of His final triumph. He not only does not see evil victorious over good, He does not even see evil existing with good. What He sees is the overwhelming conquest of evil.

## CHAPTER XX.

### THE FINGER OF GOD.

Mt. 9:27-34; Mk. 4:35 — 5:43.

After unfolding the truths of the kingdom of God to the multitudes in a series of parables, Jesus appears to have sought retirement by crossing the lake with His disciples from Capernaum to a point on the east shore. The tempest which arose while the little group was sailing across the Sea of Galilee (Mk. 4:35, 36) gave the first occasion for the display of divine power (vss. 37-41). On the further side of the lake



Tiberias.

From a photograph.

A modern city on the Sea of Galilee. (View from the water.)

He met the demoniac whom He healed (Mk. 5:8). The next day He cast a demon out of a dumb man (Mt. 9:32-34), at which the Pharisees again charged Him with being in league with Satan. On returning to Capernaum Jairus besought Him to heal his daughter (Mk. 5:21-24). While our Lord was on the way to Jairus' house, a woman secretly touched the hem of His garment and was instantly healed of a long-standing, hopeless disease (Mk. 5:25-29). In the meantime word came from Jairus' house that his daughter had died, and hence it would be useless for

Jesus to proceed. After encouraging the stricken father, Jesus went on to the house and restored the young girl to life (Mk. 5:35-43). Soon after He gave sight to two blind men (Mt. 9:27-31).

A study of these six wonderful deeds of mercy naturally brings before us the whole subject of the miraculous element in the gospel story. Many attempts have been made, especially during the last half century, to dissect this element out of the New Testament records. Undoubtedly it can be done, but what is left is strangely disfigured. The story of the miracles runs through the texture, like silken threads woven into a cloth of wool. You can distinguish the threads, but you cannot pull them out without ruining the fabric.

Apart from the action of the free human personality, the Bible knows nothing of second causes. In the eyes of the Biblical writers the operations of nature are not the product of a machine, which God has constructed with more or less skill, and set going. The thought of the Bible is that God is present in all His works. The sun rises through His power directly exerted; the rain falls; the seasons change. While transcendent over nature, God is immanent in nature, and He Himself is a free personality. The so-called "laws of nature" or "the order of nature" are simply the usual methods of His action. But He is no more controlled by a rule outside of Himself than a man is compelled to deal with his affairs by one method. Beyond a doubt, however, the divine activity is so uniform that it requires a peculiar quality and weight of evidence to lead us to believe in any variation whatever from it. This clearly is the view of Jesus. In reply to the charge that He performed His wonderful works by being in league with Satan, He said, "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you" (Lu. 11:20). His miracles, in other words, were the direct work of the

hand of God. God is not in a distant heaven; He has not constructed a machine, as a man might construct a thirty-day clock and, having set it going, leave it to itself. Jesus says, God is here, and the miracle is the work of His hand.

The later expositions of the theory of evolution, and the astonishing discoveries of physicists as to the constitution of matter are strikingly confirming the Biblical view of the relation of God to nature. As a very recent writer says, "Without the spiritual the physical universe has no ground of being, and nothing exists, not the least fraction of the material, still less anything of human affection, sympathy and personal life-force, apart from the Universal Life."

It is necessary to remember that the value we attach to the evidence for events "that cannot be accounted for by the laws of nature, but imply the operation of a causal energy superior to their action," will largely depend on the connection in which these events occur. It is incredible that God should vary from the usual method of His action for a trivial cause. The question is vastly important: Is the occasion worthy, or does this extraordinary event stand apart, isolated, without rational relation, a mere prodigy, a wonder in the air? The *Lusitania* does not stop when a little girl loses her doll over the rail; but at the cry, "Man overboard," the bell rings, the mighty engines cease their throbbing beat, the giant shaft and the great propellers no longer revolve, and the majestic Cunarder comes to a full stop in her tremendous rush across the Atlantic. In considering the credibility of the miracles of our Lord, we must take into account His character and Person; the vast Messianic prophecy and hope running through history like a line of light which He fulfils; the purpose of His mission to establish the kingdom of God in the earth by saving men from sin, and the mighty witness of Christian experience to the eternal life which



He imparts to those in fellowship with Him. If Christ Himself is simply the product of "the order of nature," probably no evidence from documents or ancient history could lead us to accept the miracles attributed to Him. But if He is the supreme character, and His Person is divine as well as human, if He is the Messiah whom the prophets discerned from afar, if He founded the actual kingdom of God in the earth, if through Him weak and sinful men are conscious of sharing even here the eternal life, all doubts and difficulties are paled like the light of candles before the brightness and glory of the morning sun. The reason for the unusual working of the hand of God in human history is not slight and trivial but splendid and adequate.

In His own day Jesus said, "If I by the finger of God cast out demons, then is the kingdom of God come upon you." The men who saw those mighty works had an immediate evidence which we lack, but we see the kingdom of God as they did not and could not see it, and we can say with believing and adoring hearts, The kingdom of God has come through the hand of God, and the wonder and power of that coming make the mighty works of the Son of God, through whom it came, reasonable and probable.



## CHAPTER XXI.

### THE CONDITIONS OF EFFECTIVE CHRISTIAN WORK.

Mt. 9:35—11:1; Mk. 6:1-6a.

Soon after the raising of Jairus' daughter, Jesus appears to have returned to Nazareth, accompanied by the Twelve. He found His townsmen still indisposed to accept Him. They did not, however, as during His former visit, attempt to treat Him with violence (Lu. 4:16-30). Jesus had become almost a national character, and doubtless many of the Nazarenes felt a good deal of satisfaction in the prominence of one who had been brought up in their village, which does not appear to have borne any too good a name (Jo. 1:46). The circumstance, however, that they could recall the humble surroundings of His early life begot in their minds a fatal prejudice against His claims.

At this juncture Jesus adopted a comprehensive scheme for the evangelization of Galilee. The purpose of this plan was twofold—actually to evangelize the northern province, and to give His disciples needed practice in this kind of work. Heretofore our Lord usually accompanied His disciples on their preaching tours; or, to put it more accurately, they had gone with Him, and assisted Him. Now He does not go with them, but sends them forth by two and two.

It may be alleged with some show of reason that the instructions Jesus gave His disciples, just before they left for this evangelistic tour, were so related to the specific needs of Galilee at that time that they have little value for us. We live in a different world—a world of steam cars and telephones, of hotels and a commercialized social order—and these directions about coats and shoes, about depending on

hospitality, and about the way to meet persecution are exceedingly remote from modern conditions. They contemplate a different world from that in which we live. Such statements are true, and it is only when we penetrate to the principle and spirit underlying these precepts that we gain from them any practical guidance in present-day conditions. The proper, indeed, the necessary, inquiry when we study this passage is, What principles did Jesus lay down as to effective evangelization?

In the first place, it is clear that Jesus was providing for the extension of His kingdom through the agency of well-trained men. Jesus did not by any means welcome to this public work every one whose heart responded to Him (Mk. 5:19). The Twelve had already enjoyed a superb initiation into the work of the Gospel ministry, and this preaching tour was to give them still larger discipline and experience. The first ministers of the Gospel were not only picked but trained men. The "call" was not enough, or rather the "call" was not simply a call to service, it was a call to acquire equipment in order that they might render service. The Christian church has not misapprehended the ideas of Jesus setting apart certain men for the work of the ministry, and in seeking to give them the best possible training for this service. The specific point at which some churches have misinterpreted Jesus has been in regarding these ministers as priests, mediating between God and men by virtue of peculiar supernatural endowments, rather than as prophets, speaking the good tidings to men, which their hearers are to receive, and upon which they are to act. The question as to what sort of training those who are to enter the Christian ministry should receive is always open. It is receiving much attention to-day, and various proposals are urged for a revision of the work of our theological seminaries. This is right and wise.

Such questions are to be answered upon the broadest consideration as to the best way of meeting actual conditions. But the question as to the need of training, the most adequate the wisdom of the time can afford, is not open—either in the New Testament or in the deliberations of our modern churches.

Again, our Lord's instructions suggest the manifold ministry of the Gospel to the needs of men. The Twelve were not only to proclaim the message of Jesus but they were to do the works of Jesus (Mt. 10:8). It has been impossible to seduce the Roman church into the practice of remanding ministry to the body to the care of the state. The hospital, the dispensary, the orphanage, the refuge, are under the care of the church, supported by the church, and one who receives these ministries cannot be unaware that it is the church which is extending this help. There is enormous power over men in this ministry. It makes the spiritual ministry more intelligible; it proceeds on the sound principle that a man is a unity and not a collection of unrelated compartments. Some of the most thoughtful leaders of our Protestant churches are now asking whether Protestantism, by consenting to the secularization of the very charities which Protestant Christians so largely support, is not failing to utilize a superb opportunity for extending the kingdom of God. We are understanding the worth of medical missions in our foreign missionary work. Unless present indications are misleading, our American Protestant churches are coming to a new appreciation of the necessity of doing the works of Christ at home, and of doing these works themselves—not simply contributing the money which is administered without any odor of the love of God.

Furthermore, our Lord's directions bring into a bright light the necessity of His own spirit in this vast enterprise of bringing the Gospel to men. He did not forget the dictates of courtesy, and He cau-

tions them about this (Mt. 10:12). He read character and discriminated between men on that basis. He urges them to do this (Mt. 10:11, 17). He showed directness and decision in dealing with specific cases (Lu. 9:57-62); the disciples are to manifest the same (Mt. 10:13-15). He was absolutely devoted to the will of His Father, and free from anxieties because He was in the Father's hand. That was the very spirit in which He counseled the Twelve to go forth (Mt. 10:19, 20, 28-33). It seems as if the simple statement, "It is enough for the disciple that he be as his teacher" (Mt. 10:25) crystallized the whole idea. The imperative condition of successful effort in the kingdom is that the disciple shall be as his Master. We shall find it very difficult to improve upon the ideas of Jesus as to the conditions of successful Christian work—adequate training for it; the proclamation of His message with the doing of His works; the possession of His spirit.

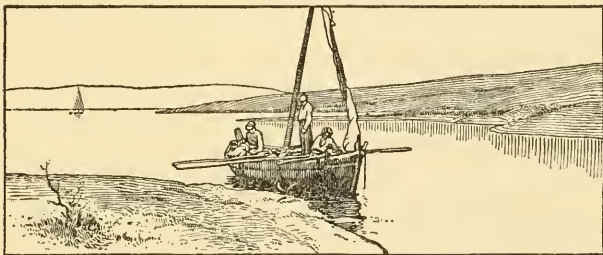
## CHAPTER XXII.

### A GREAT TEMPTATION.

Mk. 6:14-46; Jo. 6:1-15.

Three events conspired to force upon Jesus a decision as to whether or not He would permit His countrymen to make Him their king.

The first was the murder of John the Baptist by Herod. The circumstances of this foul deed are recounted with lifelike fidelity in the gospel of Mark (6:14-29). None of the Evangelists describes the effect of this atrocity upon the people as a whole,



From "Leeper photographs," copyright, 1902.

#### The Landing-place at Bethsaida Julias.

Showing the entrance of the Jordan river into the Sea of Galilee. It was near here that the feeding of the five thousand took place.

but it requires only a slight exercise of an historical imagination to reproduce the main features of the situation. Modern students of New Testament times are inclined to believe that the preaching of John the Baptist moved Palestine profoundly. John seems to have had an enormous following, and his message struck home to the hearts of his hearers. When, therefore, Herod Antipas—the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, the official representative of the hated Roman power—apprehended John, and imprisoned

him in the fortress of Machærus, because the Baptist had ventured to apply some of the universally recognized principles of morality to his conduct; and when, in subservience to the wiles of two shameless women, Herod beheaded John, the popular indignation against the tetrarch and the Roman power must have reached an intensity that made the public mind ready for a revolt. Many a revolution has advanced to success from a less substantial motive.

In the second place, the results of the third preaching tour, which was in progress at the time John was beheaded, appear to have been entirely satisfactory. The disciples, going out by two and two, found a ready response to their message, and their works of healing reinforced the spiritual impression. The confidence that Jesus would show Himself to be the expected Messiah came to be very widely shared. We can at once appreciate how this strong public opinion was reinforced by the news of the tragedy of the Baptist's death. Calm students of politics, for there were such in Galilee and at Jerusalem, could see a situation forming in which Jesus, especially if He had the miraculous powers usually attributed to Him, could easily set up a power that might hold its own even against Rome.

The third factor was the miracle of the feeding of the five thousand, which Jesus wrought at "the psychological moment," when public opinion was crystallizing in favor of making Him king. The supernatural resources displayed in this miracle, and the number of persons affected by it removed the last doubt as to the success of a revolution which Jesus should lead. Even Cæsar's famous tenth legion would be helpless before a power that could feed a throng with a few loaves and small fishes. With such a power as this upon their side the Jews need take no account of the soldiers they could enlist, of the equipment they could furnish, of the treasure

they could provide. No matter what their resources, be they much or little, success was guaranteed from the start.

An analysis, therefore, of the situation shows that the author of the fourth gospel was not indulging in a rhetorical flourish when he wrote, "Jesus therefore perceiving that they were about to come and take him by force, to make him king, withdrew again into the mountain himself alone" (Jo. 6:15). These words are an exact outline of the state of things at this juncture; and Jesus was compelled by events to make a decision that is comparable with His resistance of the temptations in the wilderness at the outset of His ministry.

Most expositors and authors of lives of Jesus pay far too little attention to this night upon the mountain. In a real sense Jesus had come to a parting of the ways. We have seen that in meeting the temptations that came to Him immediately after His baptism Jesus decided that His powers must be devoted unselfishly to the highest spiritual ends (Chapter V of this book). Now there was an opportunity to revise that decision. Indeed, the course of events, in a way, had compelled Him to consider whether or not He would yield to the pressure of public opinion. There was an easy way and a hard way before Him. The one path led to a splendid temporal sovereignty, not by any means divorced from spiritual influences; the other path led to rejection by His own people, and the horrors of the cross. We have not penetrated to the inner life of Jesus until we come to a satisfactory answer to the question, Why did Jesus so absolutely reject every secular means for founding His kingdom? And the satisfactory answer, bringing with it great insights, comes when we realize the nature of Christ's kingdom, and its dependence upon spiritual agencies. Jesus might have done His nation and the world at large enormous good by yield-

ing to the pressure to accept an earthly kingship. But He would not have conferred upon the world the highest good, the good it most needs, if He had been diverted from His purpose of winning the spiritual allegiance of free personalities through the revelation of the character of God.

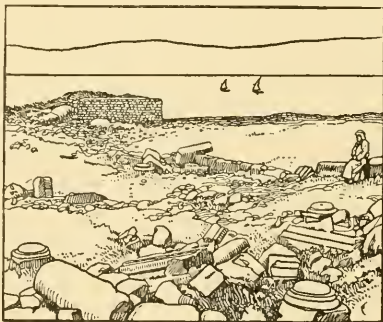


## CHAPTER XXIII.

### THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

Mt. 14:24-36; Mk. 6:47—7:23; Jo. 6:16-71.

It became evident to Jesus that He could not permit the people to remain in doubt much longer as to the real character of His purposes. The misconceptions they entertained about Him were natural, almost inevitable. All that the New Testament says, and the disclosures of long centuries of Christian history have not always emancipated the minds of earnest-hearted followers of Jesus from kindred misinterpretations. It became imperative that Jesus should put a stop to the false impressions as to His mission which were giving rise to the demand that He should assert a temporal sovereignty. An opportunity presented itself the day after the five thousand were fed. During the night Jesus had appeared walking on the water to the relief of His distressed companions (Mt. 14:23-33). The miracle deeply confirmed the conviction of the disciples that Jesus was the Son of God (vs. 33). They needed the strong faith begotten by the experiences of the night for what awaited them. Immediately on reaching land in the early morning Jesus seems to have gone to Capernaum, and there many of those



From a stereograph, copyright by H. C. White Co.  
Ruins at Tell Hum.

The probable site of Capernaum.

who had been fed by the miracle of the previous day, after a thorough search of the whole countryside, found Him in the synagogue.

Jesus improved the occasion to make the most distinct exposition, if we except the implications of the Sermon on the Mount, which may not have been widely known at this time, that He had yet given of His mission and of His relationship to men. In the fourth gospel we have an unusually full summary of what He said. It is commonly known as the discourse on the Bread of Life.

The imagery of the discourse grows directly out of the fact that the men before Him, within twenty-four hours, had been fed by a miracle. Their immediate hope was that another miracle of the same sort might be wrought. For a moment the vision of a kingdom, with Jesus at its head, in which they would be relieved of the necessity of work for daily bread swept before their mind. This was the audience to which Jesus spoke about the bread of life.

The course of Jesus' thought closely resembles that in the conversation with the woman of Samaria. The purpose in both is the same; the figures are similar. She was thinking of water, and said, "Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not" (Jo. 4:15). They were thinking of bread, and said, "Lord, evermore give us this bread" (Jo. 6:34). In both cases Jesus used the thing which satisfies a want of the body as a symbol of the satisfaction of the wants of the spirit that God had provided for men in Himself, and so He could say to the woman, "Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst" (Jo. 4:14), and to these representatives of the people at Capernaum, "I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall not hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst" (Jo. 6:35).

The woman of Samaria seems to have received a suggestion of the truth that the water springing up

in Jacob's well was a symbol of the eternal fountain; and at Capernaum Jesus made it so clear that there was no longer any room for misunderstanding that His aim was to meet those deeper wants of the human spirit, of which the hunger of the body is only a reflection in the realm of the sensuous.

At Capernaum, however, He was more explicit than in Samaria as to the relationship of men to this provision of God for men. He explained that what is to satisfy human need is not something that He bestows apart from Himself. It is not a cup of water or a loaf of bread thought of as something external to Himself and to them, but the water and the bread are Himself. He Himself is the gift of God.

Some of the current representations of the way of salvation do not rise to the height of this great argument. The gift of God in Christ is not like a ticket, or a coin, or a cup of water, or a loaf of bread, that one can take from the hand of another and remain the same man afterwards as before. The gift of God is a fellowship, and no one can enter into a personal fellowship with another and remain the same man. His response to the fellowship opens his inner life to the personality that he welcomes. Nothing does more to determine character than our fellowships. The forces of heredity and environment are almost weak in comparison with the tremendous reactions of personalities upon each other. One can be unaffected in his deeper life by external gifts, no matter how glad he may be to have them, but one cannot be unaffected even to the very springs of his being by the fellowships he entertains. That is why the response of the soul to the fellowship of Jesus Christ is the transforming power over character, and to know Him is eternal life (Jo. 6:54; 17:3).

This is the thought of Jesus in the figure of eating His flesh and drinking His blood. We degrade the whole conception when we forget His own caution in

this very passage that "it is the spirit that giveth life; the flesh profiteth nothing" (Jo. 6:63). Jesus said that He Himself was "the bread of life," and that, just as to appropriate bread one must eat it and be nourished by it, so to appropriate the bread of life one must come into the most intimate relations with Him that the constitution of personalities permits.

It is not in the least surprising that the proclamation of these spiritual truths alienated and angered those who heard Jesus in Capernaum. They saw at once that it was no longer possible to believe that He could be used to bring about independence of Rome, or even to give them bread by miracles. "Upon this many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him" (Jo. 6:66).

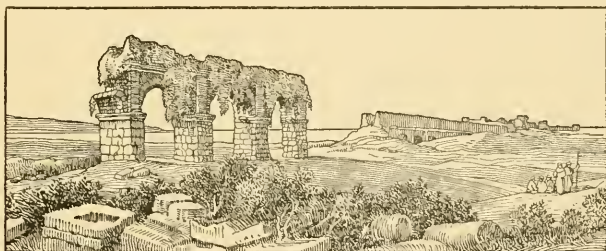
We cannot miss the pathos of the question that at this juncture our Lord addressed to the Twelve, "Would ye also go away?" But the instructions of the past had not been wholly in vain. These men had begun to discern through the lens of the material fact the spiritual reality, and Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we have believed and known that thou art the Holy One of God" (Jo. 6:68, 69).

## CHAPTER XXIV.

### THE UNITY OF THE CHARACTER OF JESUS.

Mk. 7:24—8:22a.

Most human personalities disclose a lack of inner coherence, harmony and unity. They have unrelated and uncoördinated faculties, impulses and tendencies. In Kipling's story of *The Ship that Found Herself*, most men can read a searching parable of their own inner lives. The several parts of their natures do not work smoothly together and contribute their proper service toward the common purpose. Hence we find ourselves and others full of surprises, inconsistencies and contradictions. In one mood or in



Ruins at Tyre.

one set of circumstances men hardly appear to be the same persons that they show themselves to be in other frames of mind and in other surroundings.

Strictly speaking there are no surprises in the life of Jesus. We may wonder at the plane upon which He lived, it is so above that of men; we may be amazed at the spirituality of His purpose; we may be astounded at the way He subordinated matchless resources to moral influences and agencies, but, after all, when we have grasped the principles that controlled Him, and the end He had in view, His career

is coherent and orderly. The element of surprise is confined to the personality of Jesus itself, not to its manifestations, which all spring from and illustrate a spirit at peace with itself.

The incidents recorded of our Lord's journeys into the borders of the heathen world after the great defection at Capernaum illustrate this feature of His character. In these incidents the surroundings are different from those which occur elsewhere in the gospels. He is no longer on Jewish soil where the predominant features of architecture, language or customs reflect the life of the Old Testament. In the province of Syrophœnicia He came in contact with the old Canaanitish civilization that had done so much to expand the ideas of Israel and to corrupt its morals. In the Greek cities to the west of the Jordan and in Decapolis He was in the atmosphere of the Greek life that already manifested tokens of decadence. In former days He had been followed by grateful, applauding multitudes. Now the number of His companions had shrunk to the Twelve, with possibly a few other friends. Hitherto He had been engaged in an aggressive propaganda among the people at large. The masses of the people had failed Him as absolutely as the upper classes. Jesus was not misled by the modern fallacy that the so-called "common people" are morally more open-minded and responsive to spiritual appeals than the privileged classes. Probably He did not make any distinction between ranks. All were men, and He knew what was within man. Now that the masses and the classes both repudiated Him, He abandoned evangelistic work, and in the semi-seclusion of these journeys into foreign territory devoted Himself to the instruction of the Twelve. So far from proclaiming the kingdom He sought obscurity, and especially warned those whom He healed at this period not to report it (Mk. 8:22-30).

And yet we feel that He is the same person. We should know Him anywhere. The changes of the outward have not affected the inward, which can be true to itself and manifest itself as a unity in any time or place.

Three prominent events of this period strikingly illustrate this characteristic. Jesus is the same sympathetic minister to human suffering in Phœnicia as in Galilee. The correctness of this statement has sometimes been challenged. It has been said that His treatment of the Canaanitish woman was brusque to the point of harshness. The narrative, perhaps, may be read in that way, but such an interpretation misses the nuances that taught the disciples an important lesson. Probably their attitude toward the Canaanitish people, the hereditary enemies and the corrupters of Israel, was that of poorly concealed patronage, if not contempt. In the eyes of Peter and the rest these people were "dogs." When Jesus said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread and cast it to the dogs" (Mk. 7:27), He was using the language of the disciples, and there was something in tone or eye which led the woman to see that. A slight inflection or a glance would be sufficient. The woman's answer was thoroughly sympathetic with His point of view. She might be a "dog" in the eyes of Peter and the rest, but she knew that she was not so in His eyes. It was not simply her persistence under rebuke, but the keen insight and confidence of her faith in Jesus, shown in her apt and humble answer, that at once placed her in the same rank with the Roman centurion (Mt. 8:10), also a foreigner to Israel.

The second incident was the feeding of the four thousand. The miracle so resembles the feeding of the five thousand just before His last visit to Capernaum, that some authorities identify the two, but the language in Mk. 8:19, 20 is decisive against that



interpretation. The occasions were very different. The four thousand must have been largely Gentile. He showed that after His rejection by His own people His attitude toward men was unchanged.

The rebuke of the disciples also manifested the same devotion to spiritual ends which marked the program adopted at the temptation. The demand for a sign in the sky (Mk. 8:11-13) has a close resemblance to the second temptation (Mt. 4:5, 6). Evidently the disciples were disappointed that He had not acceded to this demand. His caution, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees [reliance on externals] and the leaven of Herod [political ambition]," met this precise mood. They thought that their failure to take a supply of bread was the point of the admonition, but He reminded them at once that He had abundantly shown by two miracles that He could supply the lack of bread (Mk. 8:18-21). What He could not do was to eradicate from their souls the confidence in externalities and the worldliness that were all about them, unless their eyes and ears were open to His spiritual message.

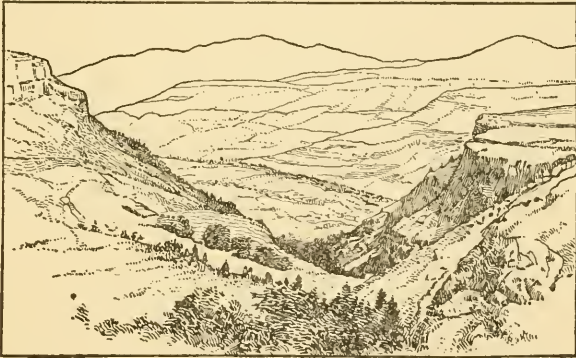
These weeks, possibly months, after the rejection at Capernaum were full of elements of discouragement. In such periods brave men find their visions dissolving, and they ask, "What is the use?" Such experiences transform character, and make men hard and cynical and bitter. But the glimpses we have of our Lord during this trying time disclose the same calmness and sympathy and insight that marked the days of growing favor.

## CHAPTER XXV.

### THE GREAT CONFESSION.

Mt. 16:13-28; Mk. 8:22-26.

Matthew records that not only the Pharisees but the Sadducees asked of Jesus a sign in the sky. The phrase "and Sadducees" (Mt. 16:1) signifies that the two hostile parties among the Jews recognized a common danger in the spread of the influence of Jesus, and forgetting their differences, made common cause against Him. Jesus saw the inevitable end of this



• View in the Lebanon Mountains.

From a photograph.

combination. The two parties could array all Judaism against Him and in all likelihood compass His death.

The gospel narrative presents some striking resemblances to the masterpieces of Greek tragedy. At first the situation appears to involve countless possibilities as to the final issue; but, as we follow the unfolding of characters and events, and their reactions, we become aware that the process is moving toward an

inevitable end. That is the way we come to feel as we ponder the gospel story. In view of the personality of Jesus, and the characters, ambitions, and prejudices of the men of His time, who had the places of power, there was no other possible issue than the death of Jesus. Our Lord Himself saw this clearly, and accepted it.

The purpose of the journey from the shores of the Sea of Galilee to the foot-hills of Hermon was that Jesus and the Twelve might have a few weeks of unmolested association in a region that was so largely Gentile that the fierce Jewish rancor could not be easily kindled. It was on this journey that Jesus ventured to put to the test His disciples' recognition of His nature. First He asked them who men said He was. Having received their answer He passed to the close and momentous question: "But who say ye that I am" (Mt. 16:15)? Peter, at once, responded for the rest in the great confession, "Thou art the Christ [the Messiah], the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:16).

The significance of this answer of Peter as distinguished from previous confessions of our Lord's Messiahship, such as that of Andrew to Simon, and of Philip to Nathanael (Jo. 1:41, 45), or that of Nathanael himself (Jo. 1:49), or that of the disciples after they had been rescued in the storm (Mt. 14:33), or that of Peter after the crisis at Capernaum (Jo. 6:68, 69), was that these confessions, except that of Peter at Capernaum, were made with a certain idea of the Messiahship in the speaker's mind. Even the confession at Capernaum was uttered immediately after a stupendous miracle, and before there was an opportunity of realizing the full extent of the defection that followed the discourse on the Bread of Life, or the full import of that teaching. But now several weeks had passed. There had been ample opportunity for meditation upon what had happened, and upon what Jesus had said. The union of those hereditary

enemies, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, against Jesus had been demonstrated, and the dumbest minds had begun to see what that involved. The old material, political conception of the Messiah had been shattered, if not destroyed. In view of these circumstances we see at once how much it meant that Peter answered, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The previous confessions had assumed that Jesus conformed, or would conform, to the speaker's idea of the Messiah. But now those popular notions of the Messiahship had been largely dispelled in the mind of Peter. His confession therefore meant, not that Jesus satisfied his idea of the Messiah, but that he left his conception of the Messiah to be filled out and interpreted by the personality and work of Jesus. It meant that Jesus was so manifestly the Christ, that he subordinated his judgment of what the Christ should be to the disclosures that Jesus should make of Himself. It is related of several famous generals—of Napoleon, of Grant, and of Lee—that, in disguise, without any indication of their rank, they would at night, when recognition was difficult, engage in conversation with one or two privates; but frequently there was something in their tone or carriage or mental outlook which caused the private to feel that he was not talking with a comrade, and often the disguise was penetrated. The intuition of Peter was like that. He had stopped asking whether or not Jesus had this or that mark of being the Messiah; in a swift, divine insight he saw that He was the Christ.

Our Lord's recognition of Peter's confession (Mt. 16:17-20) has been variously interpreted. But the obvious meaning is doubtless the true one. The "rock" was Peter, but Peter responsive to the spirit of God, and capable of this superb insight. A peculiar primacy in the church belongs to Peter, as being the first to make this confession, but it is not an official primacy, as the Roman church teaches. It gave him, as

we see in the history of the Apostolic church, no lordship over his brethren, and there is not a hint that he had the slightest power of transmitting whatever shadowy primacy he may have had to a successor. Peter himself throws light upon the meaning of Jesus when he speaks of believers in Jesus as "living stones, . . . built up [into] a spiritual house" (1 Pet. 2:5). The award of Jesus to Peter is typical of a universal Christian experience. Every man who by the spirit of God comes to a like recognition of Jesus is also a rock to whom the Lord's great promise in a great measure applies.

But Peter's true and deep insight had not yet saturated his entire nature and assimilated it to itself. When Jesus spoke plainly of the issue to which events were tending—His own death at Jerusalem—Peter could not conceive how this could be the fortune of the Messiah. His conceptions of the Messiahship were not yet so fully subordinated to the revelation of Jesus that he could tolerate such a thought. The swift, sharp rebuke of Jesus (Mt. 16:23) indicates that the very recoil of Peter's mind from the suggestion was associated in the thought of Jesus with His own temptation in the wilderness. He can see a Satanic face behind the natural reluctance of Peter to contemplate such an end for his Lord. Was not this the very temptation which He had overcome during the night on the mountain after the people would have made Him king?

But instantly the thought of Jesus came back to rest upon the underlying principles of His whole ministry. Spiritual values are supreme, and these can only be attained, for oneself or for others, by the experience for which the cross stands. But the issue of the cross is not doubtful. In that dark hour our Lord had a vision of the final outcome, "For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels" (Mt. 16:27).

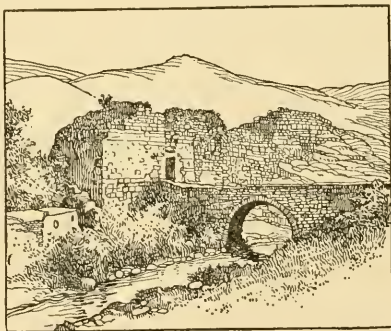
## CHAPTER XXVI.

### FORCES THAT ADVANCE AND RESIST THE KINGDOM.

#### Review of Chapters XIV-XXV.

The study in chronological order of the events described in the four gospels makes the successive steps in the career of Jesus entirely reasonable and intelligible. We see that He worked in no haphazard fashion, but according to a program that had been thoroughly considered. The success of His plan was thwarted by conditions that are inherent in human nature. These con-

ditions, therefore, have a permanent significance for the student of the progress of the religion of Jesus in the world. In reviewing the gospel history of Christ up to the time of Peter's confession at Cæsarea Philippi (Mt. 16:16), perhaps we cannot do



From a photograph.

The Gate to Cæsarea Philippi.

better than to set sharply before our minds the program of Jesus, and the conditions which thwarted its development.

Professor J. R. Seeley of Cambridge, England, in that remarkable book, *Ecce Homo*, does not make a mistake when he says that the plan of Jesus was to arouse in the hearts of men an intense personal devotion to Himself, which, through the enthusiasm for humanity which He inspired, would make His followers the agents for enlarging that brotherhood of



souls moved by common attachment to Himself that He called "the kingdom of God." The means by which this program was to be realized appeared to be ample. First, and greatest of all, there was the unparalleled personality of Jesus Himself which made a profound impression upon such different persons as Nicodemus and the woman of Samaria; upon a Roman centurion and a Canaanite mother; upon Matthew and Simon Zelotes; upon John and Thomas. This impression was deepened and widened by His teachings, which were marked by a penetrating insight into the human soul, and a positive and self-evidencing disclosure of the relation of God to men. And these teachings were accompanied by the miracles of helpfulness, which, on the one hand, relieved the sick and the bereaved, and, on the other hand, revealed in His personality a sympathy with human distresses that elicited personal affection. For a time it looked as if these forces were to be triumphant, and, from a human point of view, we may say that the successive preaching tours were organized and carried out with that expectation.

What then were the forces which wrecked this plan? First of all there was the hostility of the Pharisaic party in Jerusalem to the young Teacher. Evil men in great places become singularly acute as to forces and tendencies that threaten their positions. The Pharisees knew, from the day when Jesus overthrew the tables of the money changers in the temple, that they had to reckon with a hostile force. Up to the time we are considering, Jesus had not specifically attacked the Pharisees, but they had a premonition of what was coming; and they determined to array all the forces of Judaism and of the Roman power, so far as they could influence it, for His overthrow and destruction. The rising fame of Jesus soon became such a menace to Jewish officialdom that the Sadducees, influenced by a common peril, made a



common cause with the Pharisees against Jesus. It was like the Republican and Democratic parties in our own country forgetting their hereditary rivalries and antagonisms, and making common cause against a leader of anarchism. The official view, the view which one must profess in order to be in good standing among the Pharisees or the Sadducees, was that the prophet of Nazareth was a pestiferous fellow who must be gotten rid of.

Another force that resisted the program of Jesus was the devotion of the multitude to material ends. For a time Jesus was exceedingly popular. Many in the crowds that followed Him began to see how such influence and miraculous power could be utilized to secure independence of Rome, while others, after the feeding of the five thousand, evidently believed that in following and applauding Jesus they were embracing an excellent opportunity to get bread without working for it. The discourse of Jesus at Capernaum disabused the minds of both the political and the bread followers; and He was left alone with a handful of attached friends.

There is a resemblance between the antagonism of the Pharisees and that of the multitude which should not pass unnoticed. Both classes opposed Jesus because they could not use Him. Any type of religion can escape the perils that beset the program of Jesus by submitting to be used for the selfish purposes of men.

But behind both of these antagonisms to Jesus was that evil in the human heart which blinds it to the appreciation of spiritual values. In this the officials of Jerusalem and the multitudes in Galilee are absolutely at one. Neither can see, nor make a whole-hearted response to a disclosure of spiritual nobility and worth. No type of spiritual religion can make its way among men who lack appreciation of the morally heroic, and of great spiritual ideals. It is

for this reason that our public schools, our Sunday schools and every institution for public enlightenment and elevation should constantly uphold the noblest examples of moral heroism and of self-sacrificing devotion to the things of the spirit. The point of Stephen's sermon (Acts 7:1-53) is that Judaism had lost the power of appreciating moral values. A people that for centuries could not recognize its own best men, but killed its prophets, of course would put Jesus Christ to death on the cross (Acts 7:52, 53).

We may say, reverently, that our Lord felt profoundly the impotence of the great forces in His hand to win men to Himself, and set up the kingdom of God in the earth. His language to Simon Peter, after the great confession, shows that, speaking after the manner of men, He recognized that He must add to the resources of the kingdom another power. "From that time began Jesus to show unto his disciples, that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and the third day be raised up" (Mt. 16:21).

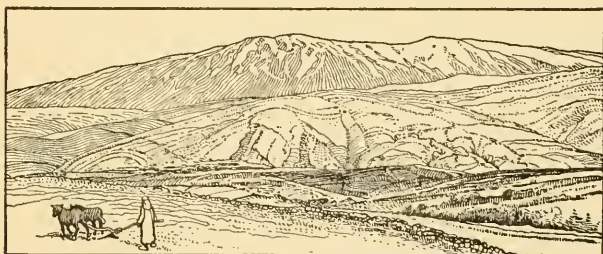
## CHAPTER XXVII.

### THE DIVINE ASSURANCE.

Mk. 9:2-32.

Most of the miracles recorded in the New Testament were wrought by our Lord or by His disciples. A few, like the witness at the baptism of Jesus and the transfiguration, to all appearance, were wrought independently of the agency of any one upon the earth, and Jesus accepted them as evidences that He was walking in the way the Father had appointed, fulfilling the divine plan.

As we have seen repeatedly in the course of these



From a photograph.

**Mount Hermon.**

studies, Jesus always refused to work a miracle for His own personal advantage. He fixed that principle in His attitude toward the first temptation. He would not turn the stones into bread to save Himself from starving, but, a few days later, He turned the water into wine to save His host from a social embarrassment. Still, though He would not use His divine power for His own comfort, He was thoroughly responsive to a miraculous assurance received from the Father.

If this fact seems to make it more difficult to construct a theory of the Person of Christ, we must not suffer the circumstance that we are puzzled to set forth a complete philosophy of the divine life under human conditions to obscure our perception of the truth that the life of Jesus was lived throughout under conditions that are absolutely common to humanity. He did not use His divine power to meet the exigencies or to deliver Himself from the distresses of human experience.

When the sons of millionaires boast, as some of them have done, that they have known what it is to work for a dollar or a dollar and a half a day, and then assume that they understand the lot of wage-earners, sensible persons simply smile, and ask whether or not these young men have ever known what it is to be wholly dependent on their own exertions, without any prospect of aid, in sickness and trouble, from their rich fathers. To have done so would be the only thing that would give the slightest force to their vaunting. Jesus did not live the life of the Son of God in the world with any reliance upon aid that did not come to Him as a man working under human conditions. Assurances and comfort from God may be expected by us all.

From this point of view we can appreciate the significance of the transfiguration. It was not an experience wholly for the sake of the disciples, although that element was in it. It was primarily God's assurance and comfort for His Son. The main events which preceded it make this very clear. After the confession at Casarea Philippi, and our Lord's rebuke of Peter, the relation of Jesus to the Twelve must have been tremulous with difficulty. Peter's superb insight, after all, had only been partial. He had not yet been emancipated from the tendency to think of the Messiah in the terms of his own preconceptions. It had been incredible to him that the

Messiah should be put to death. For six days the relationship of Jesus and the Twelve must have been exceedingly delicate on both sides. They believed in Him, and yet—there was always a recurrence in their minds of those ominous words “and yet.” The unequivocal declaration of the Master as to His death was too preposterous, too horrible, to find ready admittance to their souls. They simply could not harmonize it with their other ideas. If they believed it, they believed it as men believe a truth to which their minds are compelled by some external evidence, but which is not assimilated by the life, because the spirit makes no vital, fructifying response to it. The first effect of the disclosure at Cæsarea Philippi must have been simply stunning and bewildering. As we say in familiar speech, they “could not bring their minds to it.”

This was the situation when Jesus took Peter and James and John on a mountain walk. It was a heavy-hearted group. As they paused for prayer, suddenly the form of Jesus was transformed; His very garments became radiant. The disciples saw that two, whom they recognized as Moses and Elijah, talked with the Master; they even caught the drift of the conversation, and, more than all, they heard the voice from heaven. Had the soul of Jesus been troubled at the episode of six days before? Had He been tempted to re-read the divine plan to discern another interpretation? Had He been cast down in heart at the repugnance of the disciples, when they knew the whole truth about His earthly career? We do not know. Still, such suggestions may give us a true hint as to His mood. And now there came, in a moment, this revelation from the Father. We can imagine something of what this experience meant to our Lord, and to His disciples who shared it. It was the overwhelming witness and confirmation of Jesus as the suffering Messiah. Moses and Elijah, in the

invisible world, had seen the astounding fact. God Himself bore witness to it.

From the time of this experience the attitude of Jesus toward His work, and the attitude of the disciples toward Him, changed. He no longer courted solitude and secrecy. He began to bear His witness openly, and in the chief centers of the national life, as at the beginning of His ministry. He moved forward with the poise and sureness that mark one who sees his path with entire clarity. Henceforth there are no more misunderstandings in the minds of the disciples as to the issue of their Master's earthly life. It would be far too much to say that they are reconciled to it, but they do not cast the thought out of their minds. It begins to form some affinities with the deeper currents of their lives.

The experience of the transfiguration opens some difficult and delicate questions as to the possible relations of departed spirits to the activities of the earth. But the fact should not be overlooked that this opening of the invisible was in connection with the transcendent fact of human history—the cross of Christ—and even then, the communication was transient. The disciples were not encouraged, or even permitted, to remain in this atmosphere. The disclosure was not for curiosity or for enjoyment but for assurance. It had done its work when it had imparted the mood of comfort and conviction, and this mood was for service. The vast suffering world of mankind is typified in the demoniac child at the foot of the mountain. The world-famous picture of "The Transfiguration" is not only great as a work of art, it is great in its insight that over against the vision of the invisible, with its knowledge and peace and sympathy, is the suffering world, and that the purpose of the experiences of mounts of transfiguration is equipment for the service of men to whom no such moments have come.

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

### THE MOTIVES TO FORGIVENESS.

Mt. 17:24—18:35.

It is singular how profoundly men may be moved by spiritual truths, and yet large sections of their natures remain uninfluenced. Doubtless the disciples had sympathized with the confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi. They had begun to apprehend more truly than ever before the nature and mission of their Master. As a body—for the case of Judas should not divert our attention too much—they meant to be loyal to Him, to live the kind of life and to do the work to which He called them. But how little as yet they knew what that life and that service were! How far as yet they were from appreciating that radical transformation of the soul which Jesus demanded!

The revelation of the range of the Christian life came about in a natural way. After the experience of the transfiguration Jesus no longer shunned publicity. Almost immediately He seems to have returned to Capernaum—the scene of His early ministry, where He was exceedingly well known. The question that some official put to



A Jewish Shekel.

Peter as to the acknowledgment on the part of Jesus of the obligation to pay the annual temple tax—a query that, in all likelihood, was raised to involve Jesus in some controversy with the ecclesiastics—had a curious result. The circumstance that Peter was the one to be approached indicated to the rest



of the group that, in public opinion, he had come to be looked upon as, next to Jesus, the leader of the company. An allusion in Mark's gospel shows that the question of precedence and leadership had already disturbed them not a little. When, therefore, this question of the officer emphasized the prominence of Peter; it became the occasion of some heart-burning. They showed it by asking Jesus as to who was greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Some of them, perhaps, hoped for an answer that would put Peter down. Jesus embraced the opportunity to inculcate some of His distinct ideas of the true relations of men to each other.

It is interesting to notice how this instruction which so emphasizes the worth of modest, unselfish human service insensibly passes into a discussion as to the necessity of cultivating the spirit of forgiveness. The reason is that the unforgiving temper is so closely associated with the hardness and self-concern and want of sympathy that lead men to push their ambitions without regard for others. The man who forgives others, in the deep sense of Jesus, is one who by necessity is free from exaggeration of his own importance. He sees things in another perspective. One must be humble before he can forgive. To a proud, self-conscious man real forgiveness is almost impossible.

Looking at this teaching of Jesus in a broad way we may say that He affirms that there are three motives, considerations or qualities of spirit which result in the forgiving disposition.

The first is the childlike temper. What is the precise characteristic of childhood that Jesus commends? The circumstance that He said that the disciple must "humble himself" and become like the child, does not imply that humility is the distinguishing trait, even of very little children. They can be as pushing, domineering and selfish as adults. That

is not the point. It is something quite different. The characteristic of childhood is its sense of dependence. Childhood may be selfish, but it is not self-sufficient. Humble yourself and realize your dependence upon God, as a helpless child realizes its dependence on its father and mother. That is the condition of greatness in the kingdom of heaven. That spirit strikes at the root of pride and selfish ambition; it sweetens the soul and makes it responsive to the call for sympathy and forgiveness.

Again our Lord points out that this spirit will flow from a just perception of values. The greatest quality in the world is love, but the greatest thing in the world is human personality. When one has done us wrong we are very apt to look at the whole incident in a false perspective. We think almost wholly of the loss, trouble or mortification the offender has brought us. Those are the great things in our eyes; indeed, it is rather difficult to think of anything else. Jesus says, Do not think of those things, think of the offender, and make it your first concern to "gain him"; to bring him to repentance and a better mind. Do not leave any means untried to achieve that supreme end. See him first, alone; then, if he is obdurate, with a mutual friend, and only as a last resort, try the pressure of public opinion. We are wont to imagine, when one has wronged us, that we go a long way toward a high type of Christian virtue when we do not take active steps against the offender, but simply nurse the grudge. Jesus holds that when one wrongs us we are not at liberty to ignore it, or to say nothing about it. The wrong he has done puts us under the obligation of winning him back to righteous ways. And in "gaining our brother" we win the most precious thing in the world.

Still further. Peter's insistence that there must be some limit to the duty of forgiveness leads Jesus, in the parable of the unmerciful servant, to point out

that we are to reflect in our relation to others the attitude of God toward ourselves. The remission of the great debt imposed upon the debtor the duty of dealing kindly with his debtor. The conduct of the unmerciful servant arouses the just indignation of every true man. And yet, when we apply the parable to ourselves we can easily evade the point. Still, the moment we come to a just sense of what God has done for us, how contemptible and despicable appear our hardnesses, our resentments and our grudges against our "fellow servants."

According to the teaching of Jesus the forgiving spirit is the outcome of our sense of dependence upon God, of our appreciation of the worth of men, and of our gratitude for the divine forgiveness.

## CHAPTER XXIX.

### UNRESPONSIVENESS TO TRUTH.

Jo. chs. 7, 8.

Pascal remarks in his penetrating way: "What say the prophets of Jesus Christ? That He shall be manifestly God? No, but that He is the true God veiled; that He shall be unrecognized; that men shall not think that this is He; that He shall be a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense." Biblical students too often have forgotten this. They have not seen with sufficient clearness that the fact that the contemporaries of Jesus did not recognize Him as the Messiah, instead of disproving the forecasts of the prophets, is the very thing which the prophets anticipated.

A salient instance of the blindness of His countrymen to the real nature and character of Jesus is afforded by the treatment He received during the feast of tabernacles. This occasion bore some resemblance to the American Thanksgiving, in that it was a harvest feast; but it was continued through more than a week, and every male was expected to attend it at Jerusalem. Jesus was in or near Capernaum when the time of this feast drew near. His own brothers urged Him to improve the occasion, and go to the capital, and then, at the height of the national



A Street in Jerusalem.

holiday, assert His Messianic claims. Though His brothers did not at this time believe that He was the Messiah, they had seen too many evidences of His miraculous power to think that He incurred any special danger in adopting their advice, and then, if perchance He succeeded in convincing the authorities at Jerusalem as to the truth of His claims, they would see their way clear to accepting Him also. Jesus declined this invitation of His brothers to go to Jerusalem with them. At the same time He told them that there was no good reason why they should not go. Accordingly they went on without Him. Shortly after Jesus followed them alone, "not publicly, but as it were in secret." The first His friends knew of His presence in the city was when they found Him teaching in the temple.

The prevailing impression that John's summary of Jesus' teaching on this occasion and his account of the attitude of the prominent men in Jerusalem makes upon the reader is that Jesus and His contemporaries moved in entirely different realms. They hardly understood Him more than a fish can understand the life of a bird; and yet such illustrations have a fatal defect, for their misunderstanding, their opacity to truth and light, were not necessary and inevitable. They had capacities and faculties, powers of insight and responsiveness that, if exercised, would have made them at home in the realm in which our Lord moved. Could they have exercised these powers? Could they have understood Jesus and responded to Him if they had chosen to do so? Such questions, though natural and inevitable, lead us at once to some of the most difficult problems in philosophy and theology. Still, this much is perfectly clear, habits of thought, readiness to act from lower motives, the practice of a hard, formal, censorious type of religion had actually closed their natures to every spiritual approach and appeal. They realized in

themselves that terrific penalty of worldliness, formalism and self-conceit, that having eyes they saw not, and having ears they heard not. The faculty was there, but it did not function. Carlyle has somewhere suggested that the power of recognizing moral worth, the faculty of appreciating spiritual values is the absolutely indispensable foundation of any religion worth talking about. "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a merchant seeking goodly pearls; and having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it." But the dealer in jewels must know a good pearl when he sees it, otherwise his purchase will be apt to land him in bankruptcy. The great difficulty with the contemporaries of Jesus was that they were unresponsive to spiritual values.

There was only one man in that throng at the feast who acquitted himself with credit, and that was Nicodemus. He had the courage to ask a question which put him unmistakably on the side of Jesus. The conversation he had with Jesus months before has borne fruit; he has become a disciple, and his mind has opened to the truths that at first seemed so puzzling.

Just in proportion as these men failed to respond to Jesus, His own assertion of His nature and claims became positive and unequivocal. Ingenious interpretations of these chapters may possibly succeed in making Jesus' assertion of His deity shadowy, but it was not shadowy to those who heard Him on the last day of the feast. Every element of vagueness was eliminated from their thought. They understood perfectly what He claimed for Himself. They charged Him with blasphemy and were eager to stone Him for the palpable sacrilege of asserting that He existed before Abraham.

It is also important to notice how through all this conflict Jesus keeps clear and bright His conscious-

ness of His perfect relationship with His Father. In some aspects this fact is a more impressive indication of His deity than His own assertion of it. At least we may say that it validates the assertion. How wonderful it is when we come to think of it! Many of our prayers and hymns would be incongruous on the lips of Jesus. He could not sing "Nearer, my God, to Thee." He had no aspiration to know God better than He knew Him, or to enter into a closer fellowship than that which He enjoyed. And these teachings flow like a stream from a deep fountain. They are like a wife's speech of her husband, with whose heart and life her own soul is in perfect accord.



## CHAPTER XXX.

### FELLOWSHIP AND SERVICE.

Lu. 9:51—10:42.

The attempt to stone Jesus at the feast of tabernacles led Him to withdraw from Jerusalem and return to Galilee. There He found that the hostility which had been aroused against Him was almost as intense as that which He had experienced at Jerusalem. The chronological arrangement of the events of this period makes it clear that Jesus must almost have regarded Himself as a hunted one. There was no place open to Him. Jerusalem had rejected Him and sought His life, and Galilee, the most promising scene of His early ministry, had become hardly less hostile. At this juncture it looks as if Jesus had determined to go back to Jerusalem, bear His witness there again, and meet the result (Lu. 9:51). The natural route was through Samaria, but when His friends attempted to secure for Him a convenient stopping place in that territory, they were met with a blunt refusal. This so angered James and John that they would like to have re-enacted the rôle of Elijah, and consumed the inhospitable Samaritans by fire from heaven. It is worth noting that one of those who would commit this grave offense against the law of love, afterwards became the apostle of love. He also had a share in the other two outstanding infractions of love recorded in the gospels (Mk. 10:35; Lu. 9:49).

This rejection by the Samaritans led Jesus to turn aside for a ministry of a few weeks in Perea—the region to the east of the Jordan, in which the Gentile admixture had somewhat weakened the virulence of Hebrew prejudice. The company around Jesus at this time was sufficiently numerous to enable

Him to organize a band of seventy, which He sent out with instructions similar to those He had previously given the Twelve, except that He did not forbid them to preach to the Gentiles.

The precise sequence of events during this period, concerning which there are many differences among New Testament scholars, is of slight importance compared with the insight into Jesus' attitude and teaching which the incidents Luke has grouped about this epoch reveal.

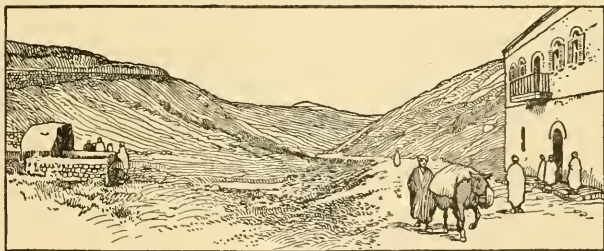
For example, a study of these episodes puts into a bright light the transcendent importance of personal relationship to Jesus Himself. It has often been said that this is the peculiar doctrine of the fourth gospel, but is it not also the clue that explains many important features of the other three?

It is hardly possible to imagine a more insistent emphasis upon this truth than we have in the story of the three inquirers (Lu. 9:57-62). The moral conviction that one should devote himself to the service of Jesus so stands in a class by itself, that it is like a royal invitation which supersedes all other engagements. All questions of wealth, of family ties and of friendship are subordinate to it. The call to follow the soul's Master transcends every other consideration (Prov. 8:36).

The way Jesus greeted the report of the Seventy on their return from their evangelistic tour illustrates the same truth. They were elated, and exulted: "Lord, even the demons are subject unto us in thy name." But He pointed out that the ultimate reason for rejoicing was not what they could do in His name, but that, through personal relationship to Him and enlistment in His service, their names were written in heaven (Lu. 10:17-20).

The episode at the home of Martha and Mary illuminates the same truth. The assiduous care of Martha for the physical comfort of the Guest was

commendable, but sympathetic responsiveness to His word and spirit betokened even a deeper appreciation of Him (Lu. 10:38-42). And from this appreciation was to come that superb act of loving devotion which has perfumed the world (Jo. 12:3). A missionary in the far west, from the land of the cactus and the sagebrush, recently said, "Men say that we need railroads and cities, with warehouses and shops and factories and residences; we need churches and schools and colleges; we need happy homes and strong men and gracious women and lovely children, and art and music. Yes, we need these things in Arizona and New Mexico, but after all, there is only one thing we need, and that is water. Give us water and



From a photograph.

**The Road from Jerusalem to Jericho.**

we shall have plenteous harvests and railroads and cities, schools and churches, and Christian homes and music. Water is what we need, and we shall have everything else, if we have water." That is Jesus' conception of His own relationship to human life. Fellowship with Himself is the one thing needful, and out of that fellowship comes the inspiration to all strong and beautiful human service. And it is because Jesus holds the relationship to God that is expressed in the prayer which Luke assigns to this period (Lu. 10:21-23) that He sustains this relationship to human life.

Let us remember that the parable of the good Samaritan stands in immediate association with the unfolding of this high spiritual truth. It is embedded in the exposition as a fly in amber. Do men say, The religion of the good Samaritan is all the religion I want? But whence comes that religion except from fellowship with Christ? After the San Francisco earthquake the actors gave "benefits" for the sufferers, and men said, "What a fine, noble thing to do!" And it was. But the remark of an eminent minister on the Pacific coast was in point. "It took an earthquake to inspire the actors to do that, but that is the sort of thing that Christian churches are doing all the time, under the impulse of Christian love, when there is no dramatic appeal, and no special emergency but the perpetual one of commonplace poverty and suffering."

## CHAPTER XXXI.

### OUR LORD'S WITNESS TO HIMSELF.

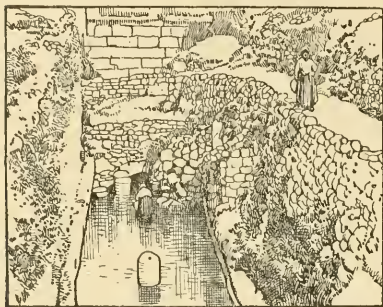
Jo. chs. 9, 10.

The plain implication of the chronological hints given by the Evangelists is that Jerusalem—the historic capital of Judaism, and the center of its religious life and worship—possessed an insuperable attraction for Jesus. He seems to have withdrawn from it repeatedly, when an outbreak against Him became too threatening; but, in a short space, He returned to take up His ministry there afresh. He seems to have felt that nothing He could accomplish in the provincial cities or in the outlying country could make up for the loss of His witness in Jerusalem. The city of David must accept or reject him. If He was to be a sacrifice, it must be upon the historic altar of Jehovah.

Accordingly, about two months after the feast of tabernacles, we find Jesus again in Jerusalem, and by an act of mercy upon a man born blind He was brought into sharp antagonism with the religious leaders (Jo. ch. 9). There were two features of this miracle which particularly exasperated His enemies. One was that there was no possibility of denying the reality of the miracle. This is the one miracle in the gospel narrative which was subjected to a judicial inquiry. The judges were most unfriendly, but the evidence of all the witnesses left no room for doubt as to the reality of the miracle. The only explanation that these keen and partisan critics of what had taken place could offer was that Jesus had a demon (Jo. 10:20, 21).

The other feature of this incident which enraged the Pharisees was that this notable cure was wrought on the Sabbath. The Sabbath question, as we have seen, was the source of some of the deepest and bitter-

est antagonisms on the part of the contemporaries of our Lord against Him. They realized that the keeping of the Sabbath was the pivotal factor in the integrity and perpetuity of Judaism. And more than this, after the manner of those whose faith is losing



The Pool of Siloam.

its spiritual quality, they held the more tenaciously to its formal and ceremonial features. Indeed the narrative shows that they were willing to put aside incontrovertible evidence, because it conflicted with their narrow construction of a ceremonial require-

ment. Their declaration, "This man is not from God, because he keepeth not the sabbath" (Jo. 9:16), is a classic illustration of the power of a formal religion to blind the eyes to spiritual realities.

The discourses of Jesus reported in the tenth chapter are suggested by the fact that these men, through their hard, formal and unsympathetic attitude toward spiritual things, had lost the power of appreciating moral values. They were blind while thinking that they could see (Jo. 9:39-41); they did not hear and respond to the voice of the Good Shepherd (Jo. 10:14). It is from this point of view that we gain a just insight as to our Lord's conception of the gravest result of sin. It is that a man may lose the sense of spiritual values; the power of moral discrimination. In His own graphic description, the faculties possessed by the soul may cease to function, having eyes they may not see, and having ears they may not hear.

The story of the healing of the man born blind, and of the subsequent judicial inquiry, is told with a skill which places the ninth chapter of John's gospel among the great passages in the world's literature. Every word is chosen with the nice sense of an artist, and every stroke contributes something of worth to the total impression, and yet we are aware, throughout, that the composition is the report of an eye-witness, and not the reproduction of an imaginary episode. For example, how true to life is the way the people who had known the blind man refer to him. What had impressed them about him was not so much the fact that he was blind, but that he was a beggar, and had annoyed them many times, probably, with his importunities. And so when the "neighbors" seek to identify him they do not refer at all to his blindness, but to his begging. "The neighbors therefore, and they that saw him aforetime, that he was a beggar, said, Is not this he that sat and begged" (Jo. 9:8)? That is a touch hardly possible to any but an eye-witness.

The outstanding feature, however, of the account of the miracle, of the inquiry and of the subsequent discourses, which by no means should escape our attention, is the absolute clearness and definiteness with which Jesus now advances His Messianic claim. He asserts that He is "the light of the world" (Jo. 9:5); He declares that He is "the Son of God" (Jo. 9:35-38); He is "the good shepherd," who lays down His life for the sheep (Jo. 10:11); He gives "eternal life" (Jo. 10:28); He is one with the Father (Jo. 10:30). His hearers did not misinterpret the significance of these assertions. "For a good work we stone thee not, but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God" (Jo. 10:33).

This text throws a clear light upon the real significance of the claims of Jesus. He could not have suffered Himself to be misunderstood. That would



have been a grave injustice to Himself and to those who heard Him. They did not misunderstand Him. He advanced the most absolute and unequivocal claim to the prerogatives of deity. That was His stupendous witness to Himself during this visit to Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER XXXII.

### TRUE AND FALSE RELIGION.

Lu. 11:1-13, 37-54; ch. 12.

Principal Fairbairn has well said: "Looked at on the surface the conflict of Jesus with the Jews seems but an ignoble waste of the noblest Being earth has known." That is just the way the reports of these antagonisms strike the modern student. And yet, we have to remember that human nature has not changed an iota since the days of Jesus. The Pharisees are types of men now living and acting in New York and London and Berlin. In all our villages there are narrow-minded formalists, hypocrites, whose animating principle is downright covetousness. The men Jesus confronted and rebuked, who finally succeeded in compassing His death, were simply representatives of the world spirit. Judaism is not singular in that it sentenced Him to the cross. Judaism could not have done that without the approval of Rome, and we well know how Athens had treated its great prophet four centuries before this time. The conflict, which the narratives of the Evangelists bring before us, is indeed ignoble, but its sordidness, its meanness, its dishonor, are simply the qualities that characterize the world spirit in its perpetual struggle against truth and righteousness.

The instructions and rebukes of Jesus during the Perea ministry, which followed His withdrawal from Jerusalem after the feast of dedication (Jo. 10:40), take on a sharper edge than heretofore for two reasons. Perea, on account of its mixed Hebrew and Gentile population, became the field in which the spirit of Pharisaism was accentuated; and, at this time, it was clear beyond doubt that the current of events was

carrying Jesus to some violent end. In this region, therefore, Jesus confronted some of the most ignoble phases of Pharisaism, and He expressed Himself with the absolute fidelity that would mark one who had nothing to evade.

Jesus summed up the inner spirit and genius of Pharisaism in one biting word—"hypocrisy." The primary meaning of the Greek word is "to answer," and then, "to personate any one, to play a part." "A hypocrite," therefore, signifies one whose words and actions are intended to mislead others as to his real character and motives. It is easy to see how such a man will develop the precise vices that Jesus detected and exposed in the Pharisees. These vices have a genetic, inevitable relation to the ruling principle of the life. For example, a hypocrite will be exceedingly punctilious in observing the forms of religion (Lu. 11:39, 42); he will make a parade of himself and of his observances (Lu. 11:43); he will be heartless, to the point of oppression, in his relation with his less privileged fellows (Lu. 11:46); he will separate totally his morality from his religion (Lu. 11:42); since he does not really believe in the reality of the things to which he pretends to be devoted, he will use his opportunities to the utmost to acquire the things in which he really does believe, namely, material possessions (Lu. 12:15; 16:14). That is why religious hypocrites are almost invariably very covetous. Their energies are applied to getting the things they actually believe in, with a faint regard to the morality of the means they employ, provided the nature of their transactions is not made public.

Students of the life of Jesus have sometimes wondered that He should have dealt so tenderly with men and women who were frankly evil, and made no pretension to being other than they actually were. The reason is plain. Such persons move with a certain candor and directness, toward good as well as evil.

The poison of indirection, of false pretenses, of self-deception is not corroding their spirits.

On the other hand, it is well to reflect that those who are really devoted to righteousness, but, for one reason or another, suffer themselves to be reckoned with those who are indifferent to it, are also guilty of a very subtle and dishonorable hypocrisy. There is only one possible course for a true man, and that is to pretend nothing, but to speak and act in conformity with his real convictions, to be sincere and genuine, through and through.

With a delicate insight Luke, in selecting the materials for his report of the Perea ministry, puts over against the account of our Lord's exposure and denunciation of the Pharisees, that beautiful episode in which He taught the disciples how to pray (Lu. 11: 1-4). That is one thing a hypocrite cannot do. He can wash his body; he can keep the Sabbath; he can pay his tithes, but he cannot pray. The power of really praying is the sovereign test of the spiritual life (Acts 9:11). To say of another that he is "a man of prayer" enables us to classify him at once; we know where he belongs; the phrase gives us a deep insight into his spirit.

The encouragements to prayer that Jesus gave His disciples (Lu. 11:5-13) disclose the heart of the genuine religious spirit. The follower of Jesus comes to God as a child to his father. His confidence in God has all the simplicity and directness of a son's trust in his father's good will toward him. That spirit of living faith in God is the exact opposite of the temper of the hypocrite. And the life growing out of it, manifesting itself in word and deed, is wholesome, sincere, genuine.

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

### THE USE OF PRIVILEGE.

Lu. chs. 13, 14.

In Luke's account of the Perean ministry he selects incidents which bear upon two leading topics—our Lord's analysis and unveiling of the Pharisaic spirit, and His doctrine as to the use of privileges. The latter is the theme which runs, like a cord on which pearls are strung, through the thirteenth and fourteenth chapters.

Some one, for a reason that can only be surmised, desired His comment on the suffering of the Galileans who had provoked the vengeance of Pilate. His reply forever disposed of that false and easy philosophy that the disasters of life are invariably the measure of the moral quality of those who experience them. But He does not leave the matter there. He asserts, in the most unequivocal way, that all such speculative questions are of minor importance compared with obedience to the call of present duty (Lu. 13:5). This truth is strikingly enforced by the parable of the barren fig tree (Lu. 13:6-9), in which the call of duty is reinforced by the enjoyment of special privilege. The tree is spared, though it does not bear fruit, but it is to be cut down as "a cumberer of the ground" when it does not respond to peculiar privileges. The lesson to our Lord's contemporaries was plain enough, but perhaps we to-day do not always appreciate that the ground of our severest condemnation may be our failure to respond to peculiar privileges, or our misuse of them.

Luke selects from his material three outstanding incidents which illustrate the urgency of the demand for the right and full use of one's gifts and opportunities.

In the first instance we see that this demand is superior to all ceremonial limitations. Our Lord was confronted by a woman whose condition enlisted the sympathy of every right feeling man, whom it was within His power to heal. At once He loosed her from her infirmity. But it was the Sabbath when He wrought this cure. His eager critics were alert to make the utmost of this fact against Him. It often seems to students of the gospels as if our Lord were put to death chiefly because of the freedom with which He used the Sabbath. The answer of Jesus to the cavil was unanswerable. Acting in accordance with the dictates of wholesome human instincts men do not have any compunction that they are doing violence to moral requirement in loosing their oxen or asses and leading them away to watering on the Sabbath. The ceremonial requirement is to be interpreted by the ethical intuition, not the latter by the former. The application of this principle (Lu. 13: 16) was so conclusive that Luke, who, usually, like the first two Evangelists, avoids all characterization of the inward experiences of those who came into contact with Jesus, simply contenting himself with recording what they said and did, reports that "all his adversaries were put to shame" (Lu. 13:17). The teaching can hardly be misunderstood. The power to help men is a divine charter that takes precedence of all ceremonial requirements or manufactured proprieties. Men are bound to do what God has equipped them to do. And it is from the free, independent use of these God-given powers that the kingdom of God is established—outwardly growing like the mustard seed into a generous tree, inwardly permeating and transforming human life and conditions like the leaven in the meal (Lu. 13:18-21).

To take a single instance, if John Wesley had not been profoundly influenced by this teaching of Jesus, if he had not disregarded the alleged right of the

English bishop to restrict his benevolent activities, how much would have been lost to modern Christianity? In his famous essay on von Ranke's *History of the Popes* Lord Macaulay calls attention to the strange incapacity of historic Protestantism to assimilate and utilize the powers of men for human helpfulness that are not within the lines of a cult. There is too much truth in the criticism. The partial alienation, or at least separation, from the Protestant churches of some of the most beneficent activities of our time is a case in point. It is always easy for narrow-minded men to say, "There are six days in which men ought to work: in them therefore come and be healed" (Lu. 13:14).

Our Lord's answer to the question, "Are they few that are saved?" (Lu. 13:23) shows that the moral use of one's strength and privileges is far more important than the solution of even interesting and weighty problems of thought. The inquirer may have meant, as his question is commonly interpreted, "Is the number of those finally to be saved large or small?" Or he may have inquired as to the success of Jesus' work: Are there few who are owning you as the Messiah, and entering the kingdom you are seeking to establish? But, whatever the precise import of the query, the significance of the answer is clear. The important thing is not to know this or that detail about the kingdom of God, but actually to enter it, to be responsive to its motives, to share its fellowship. And then follows one of the most important declarations in the New Testament in its bearing upon the possibility that there may be a time when no striving will avail to bring one within the kingdom (Lu. 13:25-30).

Still further, our Lord's answer to those who warned Him of His peril at the hands of Herod (Lu. 13:31) shows that the right and full use of one's powers and privileges is supreme over all considerations of personal safety. The answer is not one of



the most frequently quoted sentences of Jesus, but it is one that has given courage to many a heroic soul, who, in his hour of stress, has been conscious, through it, of unusual fellowship with his master. "Nevertheless I must go on my way to-day, and to-morrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem" (Lu. 13:33). And the mood in which these words were spoken was not one of cold defiance—a mood which it is so easy to mistake for the noblest—but one of unutterable love and regret that found expression in the lament over Jerusalem (Lu. 13:34).

The disposition, however, to use one's privileges worthily may be easily vitiated by self-consciousness (Lu. 14:7) and by the desire for a social return (Lu. 14:12). The true disciple does not push his claims to be honored by others, but takes the lowest place, and uses his powers for the service of those least able to return an equivalent (Lu. 14:12-24). Perhaps the menace of social upheaval, which some in our own time deem imminent, would be less threatening if those to whom God has given peculiar advantages had been more uniformly inspired with the spirit of social service which Jesus enjoined.

The teaching, then, of our Lord is that the right and full use of the gifts of God, is more important than conformity to any ceremonial, more important than the solution of any problems of curiosity or reflection, and more important than any considerations of personal safety, but this use must be with self-forgetfulness and in the spirit of the broadest altruism. Or, if from a little different point of view we ask how would Jesus have men use their powers, the answer is independently, spiritually, courageously, modestly, and in the temper of the most generous sympathy with men as men.

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

### THE JOY OF GOD.

Lu. chs 15, 16.

We are in danger of missing many valuable insights as to the significance and relationships of the words of Jesus if we do not pay careful attention to all the hints as to the occasion on which He uttered the sentences we may be studying, and as to His purpose in speaking as He did.

This suggestion is particularly necessary in considering the three beautiful parables of grace, which Luke has preserved in his fifteenth chapter. We may remark in passing that these parables are as noble examples of narrative literature as can be found anywhere. There is not a word in the chapter that does not make its own contribution to the picture Jesus would set before us.

The occasion of these parables was the criticism, which Jesus often met, that He did not consort with the right kind of people. Probably He often heard whispered the equivalent of the modern proverb that a man is known by the company he keeps. If Jesus were what He set Himself forth to be, and what some believed Him to be, why did He not associate with the acknowledged representatives of purity and respectability, and cease having social intercourse with outcasts? These parables are our Lord's answer to that criticism and innuendo. The precise significance of His rejoinder should not be overlooked. At the close of each parable He states or implies that He is describing the conditions that bring joy to the heart of God. God rejoices over the repentant sinner, as the shepherd over rescuing the sheep that had strayed (Lu. 15:7), as the woman over finding the coin she had dropped or mislaid (Lu. 15:10), as the father

over the return home of the wayward son (Lu. 15: 22, 23, 32). The point, then, of Jesus' answer is that God rejoices over the sinner that repents. Hence, in associating with sinful men that He may bring them to repentance, Jesus is doing the thing which is supremely pleasing to God. The answer is complete and conclusive, and it lifts the whole topic of their cavil into the clear bright light of eternal relationships.

But these parables go further than answering the criticism of the Pharisees, they suggest the reasons why God has this joy in repentant souls. The reasons are that men belong to God and have value in His sight. Just as the sheep belonged to the shepherd, the coin to the woman, the son to the father, so man as man, not as white or yellow or black, not as good or bad, but man as man, belongs to God. Sometimes theologians have spoken as if the ownership of man were somewhere else than in God, as if man owned himself, or Satan owned him. However such meanings may be tortured from a few texts of Scripture, the ruling representation of the Hebrew and Christian revelations is that man belongs to God. Deep down below every other relationship is the permanent essential tie between God and the soul. God made men, and He has no disposition to evade or transfer His responsibility for them. Men belong to God, and He constantly asserts His ownership.

The other fact, which the representations of Jesus imply, is that men are precious in the sight of God. It is conceivable that God, like men, should have those belonging to Him who were not dear to Him. Most men, in one way or another, have had some experience of that unhappy relationship. They have been bound by strong ties to those for whom they did not really and deeply care. But that, says Jesus, is not the relationship of God to men. He cares. Just as the shepherd goes out into the wilderness to find the sheep, just as the woman spares no pains to discover

the coin, just as the father is always desiring and looking for the son's return, God cares for men. He wants the normal relationship between Himself and them established. He wants them as sons in the Father's house.

Just here we come very near to the heart of the Christian revelation. The teaching of Jesus is unique in the emphasis that it places upon the worth of the human soul, upon the value of personality, upon the preciousness of life. And Jesus grounds this appreciation, not like Shakespeare upon the wonder of man's powers, not like Pascal upon the implications of the fact of self-consciousness, but upon the preciousness of man in the sight of God. No prophet in the entire range of Hebrew history ever began to apprehend, as Jesus did, the significance of that tremendous assertion—take it for all in all the most momentous and pregnant sentence that ever fell from human lips—that man was made in the image of God.

The clear and sympathetic understanding of this truth puts the great problems of human life and the great questions of philosophy and religion in a new perspective. It is not unfair to say that the theologian or the exegete who does not look at sin and redemption from this position of Jesus lacks the clue for appreciating His message or His work.

And we must not think that this revelation that man belongs to God, and is dear to God, has no bearing upon actual human duty. This disclosure brings to bear upon human life the noblest motive to righteousness. The great difference between the ethnic faiths and Christianity, as we have seen before, is this: The former say, Do good, practice righteousness in order that you may gain the divine favor. Christianity says, Do good, practice righteousness because you have the divine favor (Phil. 2:12, 13; 2 Cor. 7:1). "While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Rom. 5:8). The Gospel is primarily a revelation of the

grace of God to sinful men. And because it is this it makes the profoundest and most vital appeal to men to respond in the use of opportunities, and in deeds of righteousness to the love of God.

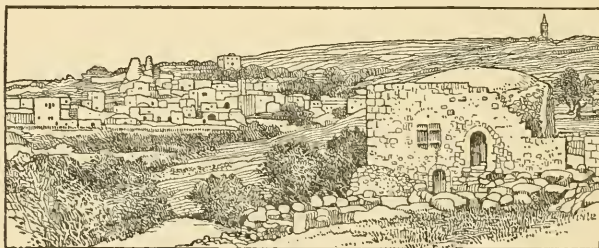
This gives us the clue to the connection between the three parables of grace in the fifteenth chapter of Luke and the two parables of warning which follow. In the parable of the shrewd steward (Lu. 16:1-12), our Lord enforces the duty of making the wisest use of present opportunities; in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man (Lu. 16:19-31) He makes it vividly clear that no self-indulgent conventional righteousness makes a worthy response to the love of God (Lu. 16: 12-16).

## CHAPTER XXXV.

### THE LORD OF LIFE AND OF DEATH.

Jo. 11:1-54.

Every one of our Lord's miracles is closely associated with some disclosure of the attitude of God toward men, or with the revelation of some aspect of Jesus' character or mission. No one of them is a mere wonder, disassociated from spiritual truth. If we were constrained to cut out of the New Testament the miracles of Jesus we should be deprived of some of the profoundest insights which the Bible affords of the principles, methods and purposes according to



Modern Bethany.

From a photograph.

which God works, and we should lose some of the clearest glimpses of the character of Jesus, not merely as endowed with superhuman power, but as a moral personality. The feeding of the multitudes, the giving of sight to the man born blind, and the raising of Lazarus withdraw from the face of God the veil which the senses weave.

Those who knew Jesus most intimately had the strongest faith in Him as divine. This fact reverses many ordinary experiences. Distance did not lend enchantment to Him. The nearer men came to Him,

the more impressive and convincing became the validity of His claims. If the episode (Lu. 10:38-42) in which Mary, rather than her sister, is described as having chosen "the good part" leaves an unfavorable impression as to Martha, that prejudice vanishes on reading the words with which Martha addressed Jesus when He reached Bethany, four days after the death of Lazarus. "If thou hadst been here, my brother had not died" (Jo. 11:21). Evidently the sisters had been repeating something like this to each other during the tedious hours they had been waiting for Jesus' response to their message (Jo. 11:3), for Mary says the same thing a little later (Jo. 11:32). Though this sentiment may not have been entirely original with Martha, she adopts it as the expression of her own conviction, and adds to it the confidence, "And even now I know that, whatsoever thou shalt ask of God, God will give thee." (Jo. 11:22).

But Jesus does not accept this beautiful confidence in Himself as a full expression of the faith He desires. The days are passing swiftly during which He can be with them. The training and experience of the past are now sufficient to enable them to bear the full truth. The conviction that He is one whom God will hear is not enough. He Himself is the fountain of life. "Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (Jo. 11:25, 26). Martha was ready for this ultimate disclosure, and she responded in words that match the supreme confessions (Mt. 14: 33; 16:16; Jo. 6:69). Indeed, in some aspects this is the great confession of the gospel narrative, for it was born, not of speculation, but out of the heart of bitter personal experience. It meant implicit confidence that Jesus was Lord of life.

It is worth noticing how the doctrine of the Messiahship of Jesus is woven into the texture of the gospels.



Possibly by the exercise of rare critical skill one may succeed in cutting out of the gospels a few texts that explicitly assert this high truth. But that exploit does not eliminate the doctrine from the records. It is inwrought in their substance, like the threads of silk in a United States bank-note. You cannot separate those threads from the paper without destroying the money. This doctrine is not in the New Testament like an alloy which may be separated from the gold by the processes of the crucible. It is in the New Testament like the scarlet thread in every cord and cable used by the British Navy. You cannot dissect out that thread without destroying the rope through which it runs.

John's description of the conduct of the sisters is Shakespearean in its clear realization of temperaments and their reactions upon circumstances. The active Martha is the one to meet Jesus, while her sister "sat still in the house." And it is Martha who gives expression to their common thought, and rises to the height of a great confession. At the same time it is Martha whose "sense realism," for a moment, puts her faith in the background, at the improbability that one who had been dead four days can be restored to life (Jo. 11:39). On the other hand, the contemplative Mary is true to her character throughout. Solitude and meditation are necessary to her. The outward fact slowly penetrates into the inner experience; slowly reshapes and colors it. When she sees Jesus, she can only say what her sister has said before (Jo. 11:32); she has no other words. The surging heart cannot express itself but in falling at His feet, and in the relief of tears (Jo. 11:32, 33). Only the greatest dramatic artists, like Sophocles and Shakespeare, are capable of conceiving a personality so sharply that the actions attributed to it are perfectly congruous with the temperament. There is little evidence that the writer of the fourth gospel was such an artist.

Indeed, he seems to have been somewhat deficient in this power. How, then, did he accomplish this amazing result? May it not be because the eleventh chapter is not a work of imagination, as some have charged, but a description of actual occurrences? Martha and Mary are described as acting in conformity with their temperaments, because he saw how these women acted. The results of literary criticism of the gospels are by no means uniformly hostile to their historicity.

No one can describe a miracle. John does not attempt to do so. He only gives us a few external details that help us to realize the scene,—the weeping sisters, the throng of critical and unbelieving Jews, with here and there a countenance upon which the light of a troubled faith has begun to break, and among them all, Jesus, conscious of His nature, and yet so sympathetic with the grief of those He loves that He mingled His tears with theirs.

The great significance of this miracle does not lie in precisely the direction commonly attributed to it. It does not prove the resurrection of the dead, for what came to Lazarus was a return to this life, with all its limitations and its inevitable close, not a resurrection into the higher life. The exact value of this astounding miracle is that it authenticates the validity of the stupendous claim of Jesus to be Himself "the resurrection and the life"; it vindicates the trustworthiness of the promise, "Whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die" (Jo. 11:26). Or, to put it in another way, the significance of this miracle is its resplendent attestation to Jesus' possession of the prerogative of God, the Lordship of life and death. It was the convincingness of this demonstration that carried the opposition of the Pharisees to its climax.

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

### THE MIND OF THE MASTER.

Lu. 17:11—18:17.

The precise chronology of the events which Luke has grouped about our Lord's final journey to Jerusalem is not so important as might at first appear. It is not even necessary to suppose that all these occurrences took place at this period. What Luke is seeking to do is not to give us an itinerary or a diary, but to illustrate the temper in which Jesus advanced to the cross; and it may well be that an event or saying which chronologically should be dated months before is narrated in this connection; just as an event which took place in Lincoln's early manhood illustrates the mood and disposition with which he carried the burdens of the last months of his life quite as clearly as anything he did or said during those final weeks. Luke has a principle of selection and classification but it is not that of time, except when the time order serves the purpose for which he writes.

Luke, then, would have us recognize four great convictions dominant in the thought of Jesus at this critical epoch. One was that He need not expect from men in general any large gratitude even in return for the most conspicuous services. The episode of the healing of the ten lepers put this fact into salient relief. No physical benefit could be greater than the one that had come to them, but of the ten only one was so deeply moved that every consideration of ceremonial requirement, or even of precise obedience to the command of Jesus was swept away and forgotten by the imperious demand of the grateful heart. It is sometimes said that it is legalistic and formal to insist upon too precise conformity to the commands of Jesus. But there is only one situation in which the

commands of Jesus are superseded in the Christian heart; that is not when those commands cross our comfort or convenience, but when they have created a new ethical and spiritual response, just as in the soul of this Samaritan the irrepressible impulse of gratitude brought him back to Jesus before he had obeyed the command to show himself to the priest (Lu. 17:14, 15). It is plain that Jesus was under no illusions as to the workings of human nature. In His mind the conduct of the men was typical of what He might expect at the hands even of those whom He had greatly blessed. The significant thing is that with no illusions as to how men would act He pressed onward to the cross.

Another conviction in the mind of Jesus was the certainty of the coming of His kingdom. One might expect that on the way to Jerusalem, with the tragic close of His own life becoming clearer, His vision of His kingdom would become blurred and troubled. The waters ruffled by the wind reflect only confused images and the menace of peril disturbs and shatters in the souls of men their vision of the future. But the confidence of Jesus as to His own nature and work was so secure and ultimate that the shadow of the cross instead of darkening the future illuminated it. No one of the Evangelists has failed to notice this. The clearest delineations of the inevitableness and victory of His kingdom, the certainty of "the revelation of the Son of man" belong in this period (Lu. 17:20-37).

Still further, this is the time when the confidence of Jesus in the power of prayer was unabated. The problem of prayer reaches down to the heart of the profoundest questions of theology. It involves one's view of the nature of God and of His relation to the universe; it involves an estimate of human nature, and of the relation between man and God. The parables of the unjust judge, and of the Pharisee and the

publican (Lu. 18:1-14) throw a penetrating light into the mind of Jesus. The purpose of the first is explicitly stated. It was to show men "that they ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Lu. 18:1), and there is no passage of the Scripture more fatal than this to the view that prayer has no power to make things other than they would have been without it. The second parable inculcates the humble, trustful attitude of soul toward God which is the very genius of true prayer. The proud, self-satisfied, self-righteous spirit does not touch the heart of God, but the penitent soul that recognizes its own sin moves His heart. It means much for the faith of the world in prayer that Luke should tell us that near the time when Jesus felt that the Father had forsaken Him these parables interpret His confidence in the prayer of the humble and trustful heart.

And then Luke tells us that the shadow of the cross did not blind the eyes of Jesus to the sweetness and beauty of unsullied human life. The incident of the blessing of the children is a gift to the spiritual imagination of the world. No matter what our theories of depravity, Wordsworth interprets the thought of our Lord when he declares that heaven lies about us in our infancy. The child is nearer God than man, and men must show something of the relationship to God that little children have to enter the kingdom of God. As we bend over the cradles of our own children the heart of fatherhood and motherhood answers to the act of Jesus. In those dark hours the sense of the beauty and wonder of humanity was in the heart of Jesus, and it may well have been that the little children, whom He blessed, brought Him a vision and a strength that no friend or disciple could impart.

And so the thought of man as he is, illustrated in the men who show no gratitude for the greatest benefit, has set over against it in the mind of Jesus the thought

of man as he comes from God. And these two thoughts of man, coupled with Jesus' confidence in His Kingdom and in the power of prayer, open a window into His spirit, and help explain the serene courage with which He went to Jerusalem.

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

### THE REWARDS OF THE KINGDOM.

Mt. 19:16—20:28.

The disciples of Jesus, and that larger company of followers who were attached to Him by ties of wonder, admiration and genuine spiritual insight, believed that the final journey to Jerusalem was to issue in the immediate establishment of the Messianic kingdom. The warnings of Jesus that this was not to be the case,



Head of Christ.

From Hofmann's picture of "Christ and the Rich Young Ruler."

but that, on the contrary, his own death was imminent as the result of this journey, fell upon incredulous ears. They were wholly unable to understand such an issue of such a life. If they understood what His words meant they did not apprehend their import. His forecast of His death belonged to a realm of experience to which nothing in their own lives or in their outlook afforded any parallel.

It is natural, therefore, that the conversation of Jesus with disciples, and would-be disciples, during these last days of His ministry should turn upon some phase of the question of rewards. This was not because Jesus turned their thoughts into these channels, but because these were the directions in which their thoughts already were running.



From a study of these conversations we shall find that there emerge three great principles regulative of rewards in the kingdom of God.

The first is illustrated in the conversation with the rich man. There is no reason to believe that he was not absolutely sincere in his question, "Good master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" There loomed up before his mental eye the supreme and splendid reward of the kingdom of God. He saw it and believed in it. How was he to obtain it? The reply of Jesus, starting with the commandments, was admirably adapted to quicken his spiritual consciousness, but mere commandment keeping is not the fulfilment of the law. The spirit is more important than the letter, and the spirit of love and self-sacrifice is the vital thing. Jesus touched the center of the man's need with the point of a needle when He said, "If thou wouldst be perfect, go, sell that which thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me" (Mt. 19:21). It is the spirit of unselfishness, of self-sacrifice and self-devotion which brings one within the circle of the rewards of the kingdom.

But this answer suggests a still deeper question. It occurred at once to Peter, who doubtless heard the conversation with the wealthy inquirer. What are the precise rewards of those who willingly have made conspicuous sacrifices for the kingdom? "Lo, we have left all, and followed thee; what then shall we have" (Mt. 19:27)? To this question Jesus made a twofold answer. In the first place, no genuine follower will fail to receive a splendid reward (Mt. 19:28, 29); but this reward will not be proportioned to external service but to the spirit in which that service was performed. The parable of the servants clearly illustrates this point. The significant word in the parable is "agreed" (Mt. 20:2, 13). The householder made an agreement, a bargain, with those whom he engaged

early in the morning. Those who went to work at later hours made no bargain. They simply accepted the assurance that the householder would give them "whatever is right" (Mt. 20:4, 5, 7). They went to work on the conviction that their employer would deal fairly with them. The householder acted as men usually do in similar relations. When one makes a bargain with us for his services we keep the agreement; when he leaves it to our sense of justice and good feeling what we shall give him, we pay him more rather than less than the market value of his work. One salient teaching of the parable is that it is not well to make close bargains with God, but to trust Him for the reward. The service done in the spirit of trust will not be unrecognized.

The attempt of the mother of James and John to gain special advantage for her children, probably at the instance of these disciples (Mt. 20:24, comp. Mk. 10:35-37), elicited another great principle that controls the rewards of the kingdom. These friends and followers were able to serve and to suffer; they could drink of the Lord's cup and be baptized with His baptism (Mt. 20:22), but the supreme rewards,—sitting on the throne of the Master at His right hand and left,—these, said Jesus, are "not mine to give, but it is for them for whom it hath been prepared of my Father" (Mt. 20:23). The rewards of the kingdom are not under civil service rules to which God is subject, and on the basis of which men can exact their dues. That is not the organization of the kingdom. The will of God is supreme, and its action is not subject to the justifications of our standards. Indeed, the very consciousness of conspicuous merit which raises us in our own esteem above others may give us a low place in the sight of God (Mt. 20:24-28).

It is difficult to see how there could be a more complete and satisfactory answer to the question of the

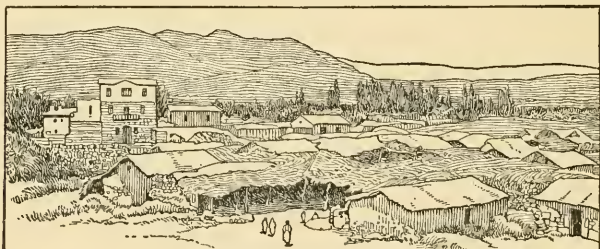
rewards of the kingdom. They are given to unselfish and devoted souls, they are always great, but greatest to those who, without making nice calculations or agreements, trust God for the issue, and they are in the hands of the heavenly Father (Mt. 20:23).

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

### THE SERENITY OF THE MASTER.

Lu. 18:35—19:28; Jo. 11:55—12:11.

Many men have been accounted heroes because under the sudden stress of a strong emotion they have shown themselves brave and self-sacrificing. Perhaps, however, these very persons would have been wholly unequal to a similar courage and devotion if the occasion which demanded those qualities had not been a swiftly passing moment, but had been prolonged for days and weeks that called for patience, fortitude and steadiness. One of the wonderful aspects of the life



Modern Jericho.

From "Glimpses of Bible Lands."

of Jesus, is the serenity and poise with which He went up to His death at Jerusalem. He knew what was before Him. Over and over again He told His friends that He was nearing the end. They could hardly see the cross even when they strained their eyes; He saw it so clearly that any effort to keep it out of His thought must have been in vain. The incidents which Luke and John cite in connection with His coming to the city in company with the host of passover pilgrims set in salient relief our Lord's calm self-possession, His perfect mastery of human hopes and fears.

For example, it was on this journey, whether approaching or leaving the city of Jericho does not matter (Mk. 10:46; Lu. 18:35), that a blind man, curious at hearing the steps of the passing throng, was told that Jesus of Nazareth passed by. In some way or other this man must have learned of the Messianic claim of Jesus, for he cried out, using a Messianic title, "Jesus, thou son of David, have mercy on me!" We see in Jesus the same insight into character, the same sympathy, that always marked His miracles. Mark has told the story inimitably. Something of the mastery and peace that were in the soul of Jesus steals into our own souls as we read and ponder the familiar words.

Again, it was on this journey that He met Zacchæus. Nothing would have been more natural than for one under such a strain as that to which our Lord was subjected, to have been careless of the publican, who had been so anxious to see the Master that he had climbed a sycamore tree for a better view. Jesus, however, was alertly observant. He read the stranger like an open book, and invited Himself to the tax-gatherer's house. One wishes exceedingly that a report of the conversation between the Master and Zacchæus, as they sat at meat, behind closed doors in the publican's house, had been preserved. It would have been an illustration of insight, tact and fidelity which the Christian world sorely needs. It is an undertaking worthy of any one's imaginative power, to seek to construct a conversation worthy of Jesus and true to the character of Zacchæus. The very difficulty of such a task illuminates the wonder of the miracle to which those must hold who teach that the early church invented the gospels. We do not know what was said in Zacchæus' house, but we know that the teaching and the personality of the Master transformed His host. The confession of Zacchæus (Lu. 19:8) is one of the best evidences of a thorough change

of heart recorded anywhere. This man's nature at least was not built in water-tight compartments. The new conviction and the new experience flooded his whole life, as the sunlight floods a room when the closed shutters are flung open. His business practices as well as his spiritual impulses were transformed, or rather his spiritual impulses were so genuine and vital that they influenced the whole man. With the prospect of the cross immediately before Him, Jesus seems to have experienced for the moment something of the elasticity and joy of His early Galilean work. The supreme purpose of His mission stood sharply and freshly before His mind as He said, "The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost" (Lu. 19:10).

The parable of the pounds illustrates the same temper in the attitude of our Lord at this critical period. It must be interpreted with reference to its purpose, namely, to disabuse His followers of the notion that the kingdom of God was to appear at once (Lu. 19:11). As men gradually increase their property by the processes of trading, the kingdom of God was to come slowly by the wise human use of divine gifts. The kingdom of God comes like a prudent business man's fortune; not at a stroke like a profit made in speculation, but gradually by the processes of legitimate business. The sagacious, large, discriminating outlook upon life this parable involves bears new testimony to the clarity and poise of the vision of Jesus.

The supper at Bethany beautifully confirms the same impression. What a remarkable group was gathered about that board—the two sisters, so different and yet so admirable, whose faith and love had responded to supreme tests; Lazarus, who had come back from beyond the grave, and the group of the disciples, even Judas with the rest! The atmosphere of the scene is surcharged with emotion. Jesus sees what is before Him. The sisters are vaguely con-

scious of impending evil. The disciples half share their foreboding. And there is Lazarus, a witness to the Master's power over death. In that quiet home in Bethany there is every element that makes for a tense dramatic situation. There is fear and wonder, gratitude and love, and the consciousness of a power that is above human ken. It is one of those occasions in which no words are adequate. The act of Mary in breaking the box of costly ointment over the Master's feet is the only sufficient expression of the emotion of the hour. But there is nothing overwrought or hysterical either in the scene or its description. In Jesus' calm recognition of the prophetic quality of Mary's act (Jo. 12:7) we gain a penetrating glimpse into a matchless serenity, in the face of death slowly drawing nearer, which makes Jesus the ultimate exponent of the heroic.

No picture has so lingered before the imagination of the race, and so inspired men to be brave and strong and true, as the representation of the last days of the life of Jesus. But we do not get the full impression of the heroism of Jesus when we think of Him before Caiaphas or before Pilate; we need also to think of Him as patient, sympathetic, unstartled, and undiverted from His mission during those days when He was going to Jerusalem to meet the cross.



## CHAPTER XXXIX.

### THE SECRET OF JESUS.

#### Review of Chapters XXVII-XXXVIII.

As we look in broad outline at the section of the life of Jesus embraced in the period of about eight months from the transfiguration to the supper at Bethany, several features of our Lord's ministry are thrown into sharp relief.

One is His persistence in the purpose to bear the witness and to accomplish the work which the Father had appointed for Him. A general survey of this epoch makes it plain that not merely in isolated instances did He meet with discouragements that must have tempted Him sorely to change His aim or to relax His hold upon it, but that the intervals were exceedingly rare when, from a human point of view, He could have felt the least inspiration from circumstances to remain true to His original purpose. We must not imagine that the temptations which beset our Lord's career were confined to the forty days' experience in the wilderness after His baptism. In a deep sense His whole career must have been a temptation. There are plenty of instances in the gospels in which a discerning reader detects the force of the solicitations that appeal to Jesus to choose a course of less absolute devotion to His ideals. By skilful compromises, by veiling His meaning more completely, by not insisting so unequivocally upon His claims, He might have saved His life, but there are no traces of such weaknesses in Jesus. He stands forth as the type of heroic devotion to the highest purpose, and that by methods that are absolutely frank, outspoken and sincere. It is not strange that now for many centuries those who have been tempted to give over noble purposes have found in the brief story of the life of Je-

sus, enshrined in our four gospels, a fountain of refreshment. Through the record, the Master has transferred to the souls of His followers something of that strength of will and that defiance of circumstances which marked His own life here on the earth.

Another characteristic of the life of Jesus that comes out prominently in this period is His undisturbed, unruffled graciousness. This is the period of some of the most sympathetic deeds of power, and of the most delicate and touching insights into character. It often happens that men who pursue their purposes with an energy and resolution that nothing thwarts are very gracious in their relations with those they love. The private letters of Prince Bismarck, recently published, show that "the iron chancellor" had a tender heart in his domestic circle. There is nothing at all uncommon in that combination of qualities, but what is unusual is for one to display these qualities toward persons who are not one's friends. Bismarck's opponents and enemies were one thing, his friends another, and to one group he manifested one side of his character, to the other a different one. There is no hint of graciousness in the historic interview with Thiers, when the terms of peace with France were negotiated. The peculiar feature of the character of Jesus is that the steel-like hardness of His resolution did not take away His graciousness toward those against whom His resolution was directed. There is no trace of personal vindictiveness or rancor in His spirit. The lament over Jerusalem, which killed the prophets and was about to kill Him, has become a classic expression of affection, devotion and heart-breaking regret. It springs from the love that will not let its object go.

But, after all, this persistence of purpose and this perennial graciousness are only manifestations of a characteristic of Jesus that lies far deeper than either of them, and that is His abiding confidence in God; that He was the Father's Son, that He was doing the

Father's will, that the Father would carry His cause to triumph. One of the profoundest of His self-disclosures was His declaration that it was His meat to do the will of Him that sent Him. This is the sovereign clue that explains the human life of Jesus, and enables us to see how qualities that are not harmonized in most of us, in Him are united in perfect agreement. Indeed, this consciousness is the secret of every life that is rarely effective in the highest ways of human service.

The letters of Martin Luther, which happily have been recently translated into English, give us a rare glimpse into the secret of his strength—into his loyalty to his mission, which led him to resist all the blandishments of Leo X and of Charles V, and into his graciousness toward his opponents, which led him to send a message of comfort to the dying Tetzl. Luther had a controlling conviction that he was doing God's will. The consciousness that we are in God's hands, that we are carrying out His purposes, hardens the soft iron of our native resolution into steel, and, at the same time, it so lifts us above the petty resentments and rancors of unhappy human contacts that we can love our enemies, and do good to those who spitefully use us.

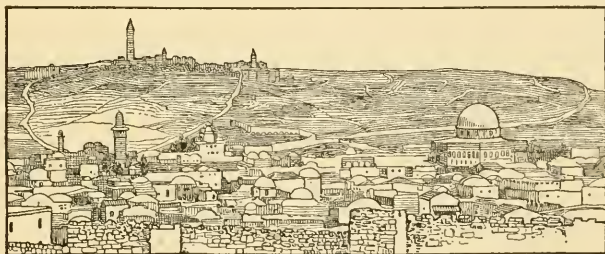
No greater blessing can come to a human life, to make it at once strong and sweet, than the conviction, penetrating to its very center, that it is doing the Father's will. Then the little fragment of our human experience finds its adjustment to the cosmic plan of God, and something of the dignity and power and glory of the eternal sweeps into our souls. That was the secret of Jesus.

## CHAPTER XL.

### GOING UP TO JERUSALEM.

Mt. 21:1-22; Lu. 19:39-43; Jo. 12:16-19.

The determination of Jesus to attend the passover in Jerusalem in the year thirty of our era was a more critical point in the life of our Lord than a cursory reader of the gospels might at first suppose. It would have been entirely practicable for Him to have sought a hiding place from which He might reappear at some opportune moment. Indeed, He might have been quite safe in Perea, where His ministry was winning a success that recalled His early Galilean work. The



**The Mount of Olives from Jerusalem.**

Showing the temple area in the foreground and the roads over and around the Mount of Olives.

disciples were keenly alive to the peril of His immediate reappearance in Judea. When the news reached Him that Lazarus was sick they attempted to dissuade Him from coming so near Jerusalem as the suburb of Bethany (Jo. 11:7, 8). One of the lights which John throws upon the character of Thomas, called Didymus, is his report that, at this time of peril, Thomas said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go that we may die with him" (Jo. 11:16).

The decision, therefore, of Jesus to attend this pass-

over involved, as both He Himself and the disciples clearly saw, the whole tragedy which followed. If He had wished to save His life, this was the time. Either He should not have gone to Bethany at the call of the sisters, or, having restored Lazarus to life, He should have withdrawn quickly and secretly into Perea. From this point of view it will be seen at once that His giving up His life antedated the death on the cross, the interview with Pilate, and even the night of agony in the garden. If He had not gone to Jerusalem He might have escaped all these. If we are to commemorate the events of the gospel story with an approach to spiritual insight we shall not make Palm Sunday a feast of joy, for it is vitally associated with the supreme experience of Jesus.

The Evangelists do not leave us in doubt as to the motive which led Jesus to take this dangerous step. They tell us directly and by implication that He went to Jerusalem to bear a complete witness to the truth that would satisfy His own nature. Up to this time His message had not been fully delivered. There were in it aspects of judgment as well as of tenderness that had not been fully made known. The leading spirits of the nation had turned against Him, but before they rejected Him finally they should be confronted with the whole truth. The reason that led Jesus to go to Jerusalem was not any hardy spirit of bravado; it was not any disposition to lay down His life without adequate cause; He was driven—the word is not too strong—to go to Jerusalem by a supreme ethical demand. He must speak His whole message; He must be true to His mission. The reason that led Jesus to go to Jerusalem was the reason that leads a soldier to obey a command to go where he is sent, to hold the post to which he is assigned, to do the duty to which he is ordered.

There are some representations of the life of Jesus that make Him simply a creature of circumstances,

caught in the whirling mechanism of Jewish-Roman politics. That is far from the truth. His death was not inevitable. He might have escaped it, but He could not escape it and be true to His mission. And that is why men in every age who have had to weigh the comfort of their bodies against the peace of their souls, their inclination against their mission, their life against fidelity to duty, have found such inspiration and impulse to the noble course in the career of Jesus. He does not merely point out the way, but He leads in it. The closing chapter of Cardinal Newman's *Callista* is simply a portraiture of the way loyal souls have met the gravest sacrifices and death itself under the inspiration of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord's actual entrance to the city was not only overshadowed by the knowledge that He was going to His death, but also by His pity for the multitude and His forecast of the approaching doom of the beautiful and sacred city. The sound of the hosannas of the multitude awakened no self-gratulation in His bosom. Luke tells us what He felt while they were flinging palm branches in His way, and the air was vocal with the song, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." "And when he drew nigh, he saw the city and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst known in this day, even thou, the things which belong unto peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes" (Lu. 19:41, 42). And then Luke goes on to tell us how there swept before His eyes a vision of the Roman siege. He saw from afar the gathering of the armies of Titus, the cloud of arrows under which the battering-rams assailed the fair walls, the destruction of the temple, the fire, the rapine and the outrage—the memorial of which still meets our eyes in the arch of Titus at Rome. Twice our Lord is said to have wept, once at the tomb of Lazarus—the Greek word used to describe His act there signifies suppressed and silent weeping—and again on this occasion—the word

used here signifies audible weeping, the convulsive sobbing of unsubdued emotion. That was the way Jesus felt on that bright April day when He rode into the city accompanied by the applause of the multitude.

The driving of the traders from the temple (Mt. 21:12, 13), and the parable in action of the barren fig tree (Mt. 21:18-22), represent the beginning of the witness for which He came to the city. As we study in detail the events of the passover week we shall see in these incidents simply the prelude of that call to purity and usefulness which constitute the heart of the message of Jesus. He believed that those who were loyal to this message would also be loyal to Him, its witness and exponent. He who loved the light would recognize the light of the world (Jo. 1:19-21; 9:5). The condemnation of the Jewish nation was not so much, in the first instance, that they did not accept Jesus as the Messiah, but that they were disloyal to the light they confessedly had, and that disloyalty blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts to Him.



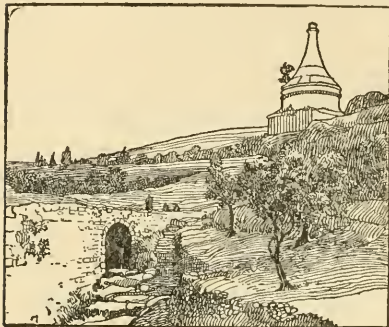
## CHAPTER XLI.

### THE NATURE OF SIN.

Mt. 21:23—22:14.

The festal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem and His bold act of driving the traffickers in the temple from its sacred precincts, were a challenge which the Hebrew authorities were not disposed to ignore. Accordingly, to bring matters to an issue, they sent a deputation to Jesus raising the vital question of His authority: "By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority" (Mt. 21:23)? The question itself was a legitimate one, and our Lord's reply was not a shrewd trap to involve His questioners in a dilemma, but His counter question, "The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven or from men?" (Mt. 21:25) was a genuine and serious reply to their query. The true answer to the question of Jesus was the one that the multitudes had given, and the one that the leaders of the Jews would have given had not their selfish passions and interests prohibited. The baptism of John was from heaven. How did they know that it was from heaven? They did not know it because John had external, official credentials of any sort, but they knew it because his teaching awakened a deep and vital response in their hearts. His message was self-evidencing. It fitted the needs of the souls that God had made, and the conclusion was irresistible that it came from God. The counter question of Jesus then is not an evasion of the close inquiry that "the chief priests and elders of the people" pressed upon Him. They might find it perplexing, but that would only be because they did not want to meet it by an honest reply. The clear, unmistakable implication of the question was that the authority of Jesus was like the authority of John. It

did not depend on badges, seals or documents; it did not require any external credential whatever; it was



Bridge over the Brook Kidron.

Showing Absalom's tomb on the right. This brook is dry in summer, but full in winter. Jesus crossed it many times during the last week of His life.

immediate and self-evidencing. Those who saw and heard Him did not need any certification of Jerusalem officials that He came from God; His personality and message were their own authentications.

This question of the officials has a strangely modern sound. Substantially it is the question that thought-

ful minds are asking to-day in all our churches and colleges and seminaries, What is the authority of Jesus? What are His credentials to be the supreme guide of human life? It is not possible to improve upon the answer that Jesus Himself gave. His authority ultimately rests upon the self-evidencing quality of His personality and of His revelation. In Him God speaks to the heart He has made. The soul which hears that voice finds that there arises within itself a compelling conviction as to Jesus, which becomes the source of certainties that are not produced by inferences from external data (Jo. 4:14). In the great words of John, the believer has the witness in himself (1 Jo. 5:10).

The main point, then, of our Lord's condemnation of the chief priests and elders of the people was that they had not been loyal to the light they had. Their rejection of Him was simply the outcome of a long course of violence to moral convictions. At bottom

there is no inherent difference between the rejection of Christ, and disloyalty to any moral conviction, for the claims of Christ report themselves in the inner life as a moral conviction. If they do not, He is not truly accepted or rejected.

In three parables, spoken in the Court of the Gentiles, Jesus drives home to the consciences of His hearers this infidelity of the leaders and of the nation to moral conviction. In the parable of the two sons (Mt. 21:28-31) He sharply contrasts saying and doing. Judaism had been prolific in professions, but it had rested there. In actual obedience to God, loyalty to the truth, it had been wanting. The son who professes much and does nothing lacks the filial disposition.

But the condemnation of Israel was not simply that it had not done what it professed, but that it had been false to a great trust. In the parable of the vineyard and the husbandmen (Mt. 21:33-43) this is put in the clearest light. The husbandmen held the property as a trust, and in diverting it to their own purposes they not only did wrong, but they wronged others. That is something that we all are apt to forget. We think that faithlessness to our convictions of righteousness injures only ourselves; we forget that such disloyalty, influencing as it does the use of our time, our endowments, our privileges, our opportunities, our property, affects others, for we hold all these things not as owners of their fee, but as trustees for God and for our fellow men. The condemnation which the story led our Lord's hearers to pronounce upon the husbandmen was the spontaneous verdict of their own moral natures upon the course of Israel.

But in this faithlessness of Israel to the light it had, the nation had not only wronged itself and others, but it had despised God. That is the point of the parable of the marriage feast. Even among us to-day one

can hardly commit a more serious affront than to take no notice of an invitation to a wedding. The wedding is the great epoch in the lives of those concerned. By paying no attention to the invitation to attend it, you say in the most pointed way that you have no interest or sympathy as to a matter which so vitally concerns your friends. There is only one greater offense, and that is, having accepted the invitation, to show by your manner, bearing and garb that you are indifferent to the proprieties of the occasion. That is the significance of the condemnation of the guest without "a wedding garment." The insult was as great to the host as if one should go to a wedding in a golf suit or a shooting jacket. Such a garb would be conclusive evidence that the one who wore it despised the host and was utterly out of sympathy with the occasion. That, said Jesus, is the way Israel has treated God. She has not only wronged herself by her unfilial conduct, she has wronged others; and done despite to the Most High.

It will be difficult upon the utmost reflection to suggest a keener analysis of the nature of sin than Jesus gave the Jews that day in the temple court, and it is as modern as our morning newspaper. The root of sin is disloyalty to the moral conviction which arises in the soul when it sees the truth. In that disloyalty the soul wrongs itself, does injustice to others, and contemns God. The disloyalty of Judaism to its moral conviction as to Jesus, was not an isolated act, it was the sequence and the outcome of the past.

## CHAPTER XLII.

### THE WITNESS OF JESUS.

Mt. 22:15—23:39.

Our Lord's analysis of the sins of the representatives of Judaism led to a coalition of the three Hebrew parties which were naturally and historically antagonistic one to another. These were the Herodians, who had accepted the Roman domination as an accomplished fact, and were regarded by those who aspired to Jewish independence as renegades; the Pharisees, who represented traditional orthodoxy; and the Sadducees, who appear to have been the rationalist and skeptical party in the Jewish church, and who had succeeded in holding the chief official places in the organized religious life of the nation. The fact that these warring interests should have been drawn together in opposition to Jesus reveals the extent of His popular following, or the stirrings of conscience His words had occasioned. Probably both factors entered into the situation. The leaders of all these parties saw that the people were becoming profoundly moved, and they also felt poignant convictions as to the truth of His words. All parties, therefore, were under strong motives to entangle Him in some situation which would afford a colorable pretext for getting Him out of the way.

The easiest method of doing this was to induce Him to say something which might be construed as treasonable to Rome. Then the Roman power might step in and dispose of Him. This course would have the considerable advantage of preventing the Roman authori-



Coin of Tiberius.

The Cæsar at the time of this lesson.

ties from regarding the popular uprising in favor of Jesus as abetted by the leaders of the Jews in opposition to Rome, for they would be enabled to appear as complainants against Jesus. The sedition would be His, not theirs, and they would appear as the supporters of Roman authority against a treasonable fanatic. This line of reasoning so commended itself to them, that, after their attempt to involve Jesus in treasonable utterances had failed, they asserted that it had succeeded, in order to get the advantage that such a charge might give them in the eyes of Roman officials (Lu. 23:2).

The first attack was adroitly planned (Mt. 22:17-22). It seemed impossible to answer the question, "Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?" without falling into the trap. If He said "Yes," He was open to the charge of being disloyal to Judaism, and, if He said "No," He was equally open to the charge of being disloyal to Rome. The device of asking for a coin and commenting upon the superscription, not only afforded a happy escape from the dilemma, but it presented an opportunity for the enunciation of a most important truth. The spheres of earthly and of divine authority, while closely related, are not necessarily antagonistic. It is quite possible to be loyal to God and at the same time to be loyal to the earthly ruler. One of the invaluable contributions which the experiment of free institutions in the United States is making to the political thought of the world is that we are demonstrating the practicability of the ideal of Jesus that men should be at the same time loyal to two sovereignties, rendering unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's and to God the things that are God's.

The second assault (Mt. 22:23-33) shifted the attack from the political realm to the theological. It was conducted by the Sadducees. Whatever His answer to the query as to whom the woman should be-

long in the resurrection when she had been the wife of seven brothers on the earth, it could hardly serve as the basis of a serious charge. Perhaps we are not wrong in seeing in this question an attempt to put Jesus, as a teacher, in an absurd position, or perhaps to strike at the Pharisees over Him. The whole difficulty in the question lay in the false conception of the future life as the continuation of the conditions of the present physical life (1 Cor. ch. 15; Lu. 20:34-36). But Jesus does not stop there. He goes on to show that the Old Testament taught the immortality which the Sadducees denied, and hence that their doctrine was unfaithful to the teaching of their own Scriptures which they professed to follow.

The third question (Mt. 22:34-40) reveals a breaking-down of the attempt to put Jesus, verbally at least, in the wrong, so as to secure the basis of a charge against Him. The point in the mind of the scribe evidently was the relative importance of ceremonial and moral duties. The answer of Jesus is practically a quotation from the Old Testament (Deut. 6:5; Lev. 19:18). The reply was so complete and conclusive that the Pharisees, whom the scribe represented, like the Herodians and the Sadducees, were silenced.

At this point Jesus Himself put a question to the Pharisees, who may have remained after the other groups had dispersed (Mt. 22:41-45). The purpose of this question was to show that the promised Messiah was not, as they taught, a political ruler. David had evidently made the Messiah greater than a son, he had made Him his Lord (Ps. 110:1). The Messiah therefore must be something far more than a Jewish sovereign to restore the glories of the reign of David. The suggestion of Jesus carries our thought to the spirituality and universality of the dominion of Christ. The Pharisees did not know how to answer Jesus. He



had silenced their cavils. Now they were silent before His question.

Jesus seems to have felt that the time for exposition, or for an attempt to reach a mutual understanding, had passed. The fact was that they understood Him and He understood them. The issue had been drawn. They would not accept Him or His teachings, and He could not compromise with them. There is only one course for a true man at such a time—to utter his whole mind, to give his whole message. That is what Jesus came to Jerusalem to do. That is what He now did. Perhaps this discourse (Mt. ch. 23) is unexampled in searching, biting invective. The secrets of hearts are laid bare, the gross inconsistencies between knowledge and performance, between professions and practice, are unveiled, and righteous passion reaches a tremendous climax in the curse of Jesus (Mt. 23:29-36). And yet we are not to imagine these words as spoken in a frenzy of anger. Perhaps we cannot imagine at all how they were spoken, for the awful curse is followed by a passage in which His heart melts over Jerusalem, the city of His love (Mt. 23:37, 38). What we are sure of is that behind all these words was the heart of the Jesus whom we have been studying.

## CHAPTER XLIII.

### THE TEMPER OF JESUS AFTER HIS WITNESS AGAINST JERUSALEM.

Mk. 12:41-44; Jo. 12:20-59.

Jesus had borne His full witness against the leaders of the nation; and those who had been especially exasperated by His calls to righteousness and faith had retired to plot His destruction. But, as Jesus tarried in the temple court, the scene of His crowning fidelity to His mission, two incidents took place which throw into bold relief His attitude of mind at this epoch when He was certain that the schemes against His life were about to come to fruition. The first illustrates His moral poise at a time when He was naturally tremulous with the excitement and reaction of the tremendous conflict through which He had just passed; the second illustrates his fidelity to His mission against a temptation quite as insidious as the solicitation to cowardice that might have led Him to remain in Perea.

As He stood in the court near the funnel shaped boxes into which the passover pilgrims were casting their offerings, He noted the self-satisfied, ostentatious manner of the rich as they made their contributions, and then His attention was arrested by the approach of a widow who shyly cast in two mites. She little dreamed that that unobtrusive gift was to be memorable throughout the ages. Like the anointing of His feet by another woman her act would be known as far as His Gospel was preached. Her deed was endowed with immortality because He saw it and spoke of it. The comment of Jesus was that this woman had made a larger gift than all her rich predecessors, and the reason was that they had given of their abundance while she had cast in all her living. In other words

it is not what one gives that measures the greatness of the gift, but what one has left after the giving.

The clear apprehension of this truth would change many of our current estimates of generosity, and it would deliver many rich men from the delusion that they are doing some great thing when they fling from their abundance to some good work. The great Christian causes, church support, evangelization, missions, need large sums of money to-day, and they are not forthcoming. A principal reason is that Christians, for the most part, have not yet apprehended the meaning of our Lord's saying on this occasion. The rich man thinks that he is doing his full duty when he gives twice or five or ten times as much as his neighbor, and especially if he gives as much as all the members of the local congregation put together give. But what one's neighbor or a group of one's neighbors give has nothing whatever to do with one's own duty. What the rich man should give depends on his devotion to the cause which needs his gifts and on his resources.

We might expect to find that Jesus uttered a declaration like this in the untroubled days of His early ministry. That He should have said this at the very time when His spirit must have been profoundly disturbed shows both His mental balance in a moment of supreme stress, and the importance He placed upon the loving and generous use of one's resources.

The other incident involved an insidious temptation. Some Greeks who had embraced Judaism sought Philip—probably because of his Greek name—and asked an introduction to Jesus. After consultation with Andrew, Philip led them to the Master. We are ignorant as to the interview itself. We only know what its effect was upon Jesus. In the eager, responsive faces of these honest men our Lord saw a first sheaf of the harvest of the Gentile world. The thought seems to have occurred to Him, for the moment, that,

though His own people had rejected Him, and, at this very time, their authorities were seeking His life, might He not find among the Gentiles a recognition that He had not found in Israel? might it not be possible for Him to win men back to God, in great numbers, without submitting Himself to the fury of the Jewish leaders, and without undergoing a shameful death? might not the very prophecy upon which He had fed His spirit point to some issue like this without the agony of the cross (Is. 60:1, 3)?

Suggestions like these appear to have been in the mind of Jesus. We have already pointed out that it is an error to regard the temptations of Jesus as limited to His experiences in the wilderness immediately after His baptism. These solicitations were only preliminary and preparative. The temptation to gain kingship by some easier way than the cross (Mt. 4:8-10) had appeared again before the transfiguration (Mt. 16:22, 23), and it reappears now in a much more subtle and insidious form. The suggestion now is that Jesus can gain His end and fulfil His mission worthily by purely moral and spiritual means and yet escape the cross. There was a plausibility in this last suggestion which concealed temptation that only a keen spiritual insight could detect. It would be manifestly wrong to gain the spiritual kingship that Jesus sought by worshiping Satan. The very ideas are incongruous, but to gain that kingship by preaching the truth to the Gentile world, by doing outside the borders of Israel what He had been doing for the whole term of his ministry within the limits of Israel, why is not this the reasonable, the true, the noble path? Did the thought of Jesus linger for a moment over the alternative? Was the vista of escape which the coming of the Greeks suggested alluring? Is that the meaning of the prayer so difficult to interpret, that He might be saved from this hour, coupled with the recognition that "this hour,"

this supreme temptation, contains in itself the heart of His mission?

The fidelity of Jesus to His own earlier insights is absolute and complete. He sees that the way the coming of the Greeks has, for a moment, suggested is no true path. What He said to Peter after his great confession is still true, that "he must go unto Jerusalem and suffer many things of the elders and chief priest and scribes, and be killed," because only through His death could His life be made fruitful, as the seed must die to live again in the waving harvests of the autumn (Jo. 12:24, 32).

Perhaps no theology has yet penetrated to the full import of that "must." After all our speculations and skilful analogies there is an elusive element in the fact of the necessity of the Redeemer's death on the cross. But, if our interpretation of the inner experience of Jesus, when He met these Greeks, is true, our Lord had clearly before Him the opportunity of escaping the cross and of seeking to establish His kingdom by proclamation of the truth. He put the suggestion aside as a temptation. If this was so, the death of Jesus is an essential element of the Christianity of Jesus. He believed that His triumph depended on the cross.

These incidents give us a fresh and strong impression of the personality and temper of Jesus as He went forth to meet His death. He was no baffled, hysterical fanatic. At the close of the conflict with the Pharisees and chief priests He retained all the delicacy and strength of His matchless insight. He saw in the contrast between the rich men and the poor widow an ethical principle of universal and commanding import, and He discriminated between the false path and the true for the fulfilment of His mission. Above them all, at this period of weariness and excitement He made the great renunciation of His whole career, and chose the cross.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

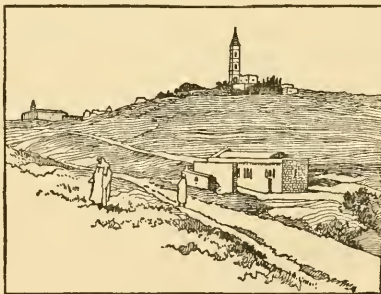
### THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST.

Mt. chs. 24, 25; 26:1-5, 14-16.

Tuesday of the week before the crucifixion stands forth as memorable in all the days of the life of our Lord. On that day He had uttered His final witness against the rulers of the nation; on that day He had laid down the law of beneficence; on that day His interview with the Greeks had suggested the most insidious temptation that had beset His path, and now towards the close of this momentous day He gave His disciples the great announcement of the destruction of Jerusalem, and of His own second coming.

This prophetic discourse was occasioned by the view of the city from the Mount of Olives. Late in the afternoon He went out of Jerusalem, taking the road to Bethany, which ran directly over the Mount of Olives.

Tarrying for a moment on the summit, the disciples were impressed with the superb beauty of that white city in the light of the setting sun. The question which rose to their lips was not only natural, it was inevitable. They recalled the tremendous prophecy of destruction which that very day Jesus had uttered in the temple court. There before them rose the temple, towering above the esplanade formed by the



From a photograph.

The Summit of the Mount of Olives.

mighty and beautiful walls that formed the southeast bastion of the city. The city itself seemed impregnable, and so lovely that an inspired New Testament writer could find no more adequate symbol of heaven itself than to call it "the new Jerusalem, adorned as a bride for her husband." What, said the disciples, casting their gaze across the valley, what is to become of this strong and beautiful temple? The answer was one to bring dismay to the heart of every devout and patriotic Hebrew. The reply of Jesus was: "There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down."

This tragic answer immediately elicited another question as to when these things should be. The reply of Jesus embraces what are known as the apocalyptic discourses, and they have been interpreted in many ways. Even sects have been founded on special interpretations of these passages. Without going into details, the discussion of which would require many chapters, several features of our Lord's reply are clear.

For example, it seems to be plain that Jesus gave the impression that He would come to the earth again. No one who has the slightest familiarity with the history of the Apostolic and early church can doubt that the belief in the second coming of Jesus held a very large place in the life and thought of the first Christians. Indeed, as we see in the first letter of Paul to the Thessalonians, this doctrine had been so pushed out of its perspective that the outlook of many devout souls upon the Christian life had become perilously distorted. It is almost impossible to account for such a state of affairs without tracing the doctrine back to the words of Jesus. And a careful examination of these discourses will give the unprejudiced student sufficient reason for believing that the early church did not misunderstand the Master. Actually there is no objection to the doctrine of the second coming of Christ that is not equally valid against all belief in the



miraculous. And at the bottom of the question in regard to the miraculous is not, Is this or that event contrary to human experience? but, Is it contrary to the plan of God? Human experience only affords partial evidence as to the plan of God. The word of the prophets and the intuitions of the spirit are also to be taken into account.

At the same time these discourses appear to teach that the coming of the Son of man is a process. A phase of it is to be realized in the destruction of Jerusalem by the army of Titus, hardly a generation distant, but the fact that the coming is a process does not prevent it from being an event also. The teaching of Jesus appears to be that His coming is a world process culminating in an event—His personal return to the earth. In the highly figurative language of these discourses these two conceptions are mingled. It is not always easy to separate them, but the general impression is not at all doubtful. The second coming is both a process and an event. Christ came in the destruction of Jerusalem, He came in the fall of Constantinople in 1453, He came in the recent Russo-Japanese war. Christ is in the world; all its changes are in His hands; the government is upon His shoulders; ultimately we shall see that the history of the world is, as Jonathan Edwards said, the history of redemption. In this sense Christ is coming all the time in the world process, but this process is moving toward an issue and a climax, and that is the personal return of the Lord Himself.

But it should be noticed that there is no hint as to the time of His coming as an event. Indeed, Jesus expressly declared that this was one of the things that He did not know (Mk. 13:32). It is one of the strangest features of Christian history that multitudes of men who accept as authoritative the Scriptures, which contain this statement, should spend themselves

in seeking to ascertain from the Scriptures that which they declare that Jesus Himself did not know.

Our Lord did not answer the question as to the time these things should be. He adopted the course He took after the resurrection when the disciples inquired as to the restoration of the kingdom of Israel (Acts 1:6-8). He called their thought away from the seasons and chronologies to urgent present duty. The prudent virgins make provision for the bridegroom's coming at any moment. It is not in their power to forecast the hour, but it is in their power to be prepared for His coming at any hour (Mt. 24:45-51; 25:1-13). And this preparation is not a noisy, bustling, nervous activity, and still less a round of professional or ceremonial observance; it consists in fidelity to trusts (Mt. 25:14-30), and in unostentatious helpfulness to one's fellow men (Mt. 25:31-46). The Master, who has just declared that He will be present in the world in the terrific conflict that is to end in the destruction of Jerusalem, now declares that He will be present in the world in the events of ordinary life so that the man who ministers to a human being ministers to Him.

Already, as this momentous day closes, the toils of His enemies close about Jesus. One of His own disciples becomes the ready tool of the rulers' intrigues. Perhaps before Jesus reached Bethany that evening, Judas had made his first approaches to the priests. He may have slipped away from the little group, lingering on the summit of the Mount of Olives, while Jesus was speaking the words we have been studying.

## CHAPTER XLV.

### THE LAST SUPPER.

Mk. 14:22-26; Lu. 22:7-30; Jo. 13:1-30.

Probably our Lord spent Wednesday and Thursday morning of the last week of His life at the home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus in Bethany. Thursday afternoon He sent Peter and John into the city to make ready the passover meal, which He wished to share with His disciples (Lu. 22:8-13).

By this time Jesus must have passed through that bitter agony of spirit which is always involved in making a decision that involves one's hold upon life. That decision had been irrevocably made on the momentous Tuesday when, by His scathing denunciation of the chief men in Jerusalem, He had closed the door against any possible reconciliation. The quiet and opportunity for reflection He enjoyed on Wednesday probably did much to calm His spirit, and on Thursday afternoon He returned to the city fully prepared to meet the issue which He had never attempted to evade. He knew that it was most unlikely that He would ever again see Bethany, or make one of the household group which was bound to Him by so many ties.

During these days the disciples must have been almost dazed. They realized that some calamity was impending; they did not know exactly what. Perhaps they felt that Jesus had gone entirely too far in denouncing the leading men of His time, and that it would have been far better to adopt a more conciliatory tone. And yet their faith in Jesus was not broken. The dispute which arose before the supper as to which of them should be greatest was not a discussion that could have taken place among a group of men who believed that they had committed them-

selves to a losing cause. The language of Jesus, as reported by Luke, was admirably adapted to encourage this hopeful mood (Lu. 22:24-30). Jesus did not say that their ideas of the kingdom He was to establish were correct, but He did say that there was to be a kingdom. Let us never forget that the superb promise, "I appoint unto you a kingdom, . . . and ye shall sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel" (Lu. 22:29, 30), was spoken at this supper.

It is one of the bitter ironies of Christian history that the farewell supper of Jesus with His friends, the memory of which suggests beautiful fellowship and divine love, should have been the occasion and subject of the most acrimonious, uncharitable discussions, and of vindictive persecutions. To realize the truth of this we have only to recall that for centuries transubstantiation—the doctrine that, by the agency of the priest in celebrating the mass, the wafer and the wine are miraculously transmuted into the veritable body and blood of Christ—has been the very apple of the eye of the Roman system. We have only to recall that Luther at the Marburg conference threw away the fairest opportunity for a real union of the great reform movements of the sixteenth century by insisting against Zwingli that the word "is," in the sentence, "This is my body," must be taken literally. The very memorial that Jesus intended should propagate love and unselfish devotion has been a battle ground, associated with all the atrocities of war.

It is possible to read into the narrative many interpretations, but three aspects of the Lord's supper are too clear to admit of debate. One is that our Lord associated this supper with the Jewish passover. The supper carries over into Christianity the spirit and interior significance of the great Hebrew observance. In a certain sense it is legitimate to interpret the latter ceremonial through the earlier, but we must

always be on our guard that we have penetrated to the real genius of the earlier observance, and are not misled by fanciful and superficial analogies. Jesus appears to have thought of Himself as prefigured in the paschal lamb. Just as there was protection for the Hebrew household, at the time of the original passover, in the blood of the lamb, His own death would bring vast benefit to His followers; and just as the eating of the passover represented a covenant relation between the participant and God, so the observance of the supper typified a new covenant relation between God and the friends of Christ.

But more than this, these narratives describing the institution of the supper show conclusively the central place that, in the thought of Jesus, His own death was to have in establishing His kingdom. His body is to be broken; His blood is to be poured out. Paul, in his report of the original supper, declares that the purpose for which it is to be observed is that believers may "proclaim the Lord's death till he come" (1 Cor. 11:26). If our interpretation of the interview of Jesus with the Greeks is justified (Chapter XLIII), and at that time He resisted the suggestion that His own death might not be essential to the accomplishment of His mission, it was entirely natural that He should make the great element in His ministry to mankind the principal message of the observance which He wished to commemorate his career. In the religion of Jesus, the relationship between His death and His triumph is so close and vital that the latter is not possible without the former. It is a true spiritual insight into the genius of Christianity which has made the cross its symbol.

And then, too, we can hardly fail to see how prominent the commemorative element is in the supper. Modern Christians owe a great debt to Huldreich Zwingli for impressing this aspect of the supper upon the thought of men. The way Jesus wished to be

remembered was that His friends should gather about a table, and take a morsel of bread and a sip of wine in His memory. How simple and how beautiful it is! And all through the ages, in the great cathedrals of sumptuous cities, in village churches, in the caves of the Waldensian mountains, on the seas, in the forests and deserts, faithful men and women have shared the bread and wine and thought of the Master. The scene in the upper room in Jerusalem has been re-enacted in their experience, and their hearts have glowed with new devotion to their Redeemer and Lord.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

### THE FAREWELL MESSAGE.

Jo. 13:31—17:26.

If the gospel narrative is substantially the weaving, around a slender nucleus of fact, of the devout fancies which the disciples of our Lord came to entertain concerning Him, it is exceedingly difficult to imagine how they succeeded in maintaining the spiritual teachings of Jesus upon the high level on which they are projected. The requisite amount of pains in compiling documents would secure historical and chronological accuracy, though these are matters as to which the Evangelists have been least careful. But to make the spiritual outlooks and insights of Jesus congruous with themselves was an undertaking of superhuman difficulty. Many gifted men and women have striven to write imaginative sketches of the life of Jesus, upon the basis of the data given in the four gospels, but whenever they represent Jesus as saying something beyond what is recorded of Him, it is plain at once that the wings of their imagination are unequal to such an upward flight.

Those who would explain the gospels upon such a theory meet one of the important difficulties in their task, when they would make clear to us how any dis-



The Traditional "Upper Chamber."



ciple, even John himself, could have fabricated the farewell discourse at the supper, and the intercessory prayer. The conclusion is as nearly irresistible as an argument that is not technically demonstrable can be, that they did not imagine but reported.

One or two general considerations are impressed upon every thoughtful reader of these chapters. One is that Jesus, in view of the near approach of death—He was confident that He had only a few hours to live—absolutely preserves His self-poise, His confidence in the triumph of His cause and in His unsullied, uninterrupted relationship with the Father. There is nothing foreboding or panic-stricken in a syllable that fell from His lips. And His peace is not that of the stoic who takes whatever may come with an equal mind, because he feels that he has done all he can. His peace was not even the strange, almost unearthly calm that ruled four centuries before in the rock-hewn cell in Athens, where Socrates spent the last hours of his life with his friends. We are aware, as we read the luminous and touching pages of the *Phædo*, that that wise and cheerful spirit could see nothing distinctly beyond the cup of hemlock. That is not what we feel as we read these chapters of John's gospel. Jesus sees the cross upon which in a few hours He is to hang, but He sees clearly far beyond it. He sees the "many mansions," and the Father's house; He sees the coming of the Spirit, and the victory of the kingdom: He sees the reunion of the faithful when He and they together shall drink the new wine of the final triumph. There is gloom at the farewell supper in the upper room in Jerusalem, but it is the sorrow of the present parting; not the sorrow that comes from the forecast of ultimate defeat and failure. Perhaps this personal attitude of Jesus toward the apparent overthrow of His work and the death of the cross has done as much as any one thing recorded in the gospels to inspire intelligent faith

in Him. Whatever the weight we attach to miracles, it is evidence that belongs in the court of the Gentiles when we compare it with the evidence from the personal outlook of Jesus upon the cross and the future of His kingdom and His relationship to the Father. We feel that He knew the issues of life and death; that the key of destiny was in His hands; that He had the secret of the cosmos.

Hardly less impressive is our Lord's attitude toward His disciples at this critical hour. The farewell discourse and prayer palpitate with personal affection. Jesus Himself was something more than Master and Teacher, He was the dearest personal friend. At this hour His own heart seems to have responded more deeply than ever before, perhaps, to the warm human devotion of these men who had been His companions. He knew them thoroughly—all their weaknesses and limitations—but He loved them and they loved Him. But strangely enough there is not in His mind the slightest sense of personal loss, on His part, at leaving them; not a word as to His missing their association and companionship in the future. All that we expect those who love us truly to say when they part from us, even for a long journey, He left unsaid. He told them how much they would miss Him, but not a word fell from His lips as to how He would miss them. What is the explanation of this? Does it not run all through these chapters? They would not see Him, or consciously share His experiences; but He would see them, share all their experiences, and enter into their lives more profoundly than ever before. As another Evangelist reports Him as saying, He would "be with them all the days." There is little or nothing in ordinary human intercourse to furnish an analogy between this relationship of Jesus and His friends. The very fact that He should have conceived such a relationship as that He indicates as possible, is one of the incidental and often over-

looked aspects of the consciousness of Jesus which points toward His divinity.

Now we have no means whatever of testing the truth of the forecast of Jesus, that He would be as actually present with His disciples as though they were conscious of association with Him through the perception of the senses. But one of the marvels of Christian experience is that it so uniformly bears witness to the reality of the presence and help of the unseen Christ. Wherever you find a company of Christians, testifying to one another of the way God has dealt with them, the constant note in their witness is the consciousness of the presence of Christ, in times of hardship and temptation, in the experience of joy. The uniformity of this witness in every age is one of the outstanding facts of Christian history. It is as clear in this century as it was in the sixteenth, or the eleventh, or the fifth or the first. May it not be that we have in this fact of the inner life a decisive vindication of the forecast of our Lord?

And we may go a step beyond this. In this discourse Jesus distinctly said that the whole efficiency of His disciples in carrying on His work would depend on His unseen presence and co-operation. And has it not been true that efficiency in Christian service has very largely been in proportion to the soul's realization of the presence of Christ (Gal. 1:15, 16)?

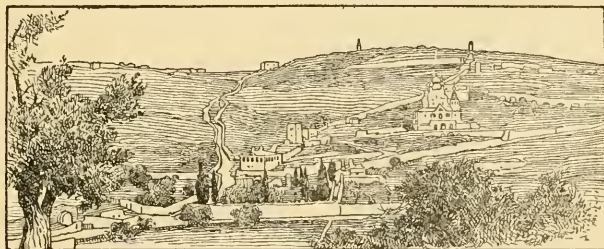
Did some devout spirit of the second century attribute these ideas to Jesus? It is incredible. He must have spoken them. And the attitude toward the future, toward the triumph of His kingdom, toward the Father and toward His followers that these words reveal, has throughout the ages been one of the strongest bases of faith in Him. When men come to great sorrows, great temptations and conflicts; when they face death; the chapters in the Bible which they wish to have read are these which record the farewell message of our Lord.

## CHAPTER XLVII.

### THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS.

Mt. 26:36-56.

It is one thing to feel the enthusiasm and spiritual elevation of a high resolve at a table surrounded by loving and sympathetic friends, and quite another thing to remain in this mood after the company breaks up and the lighted chamber is exchanged for the darkness and chill of the night. In the farewell conversations of Jesus with His disciples in the upper room there is not a hint of repining or shrinking. He strikes the confident and heroic note with a sureness of touch



The Garden of Gethsemane and the Mount of Olives.

From a photograph.

As seen from the city walls.

that imparted to His friends something of His own certainty of the ultimate triumph of the kingdom.

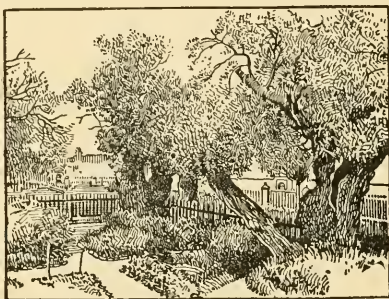
In company with the eleven friends Jesus left the supper room when the evening was far spent. The little band made their way through the crowded streets—for though the hour was late the night was a festal occasion on which few slept. They passed through one of the city gates, over the foot bridge that crossed the Kidron, which at this season was a rushing mountain stream, into the haunts that Jesus loved—the

green and shady olive groves and vineyards on the western slope of the Mount of Olives. During this walk the mood of Jesus underwent a great change. The cross looked very different to Him from what it did at the table in the upper room. He knew what was before Him then, but there were aspects of what awaited Him that did not appeal to Him then in just the same way that they did now. We brace ourselves to bear a misfortune, and we think that it cannot be worse when it comes than it is now, after we have made up our minds to it. But when the telegram actually comes announcing the sweeping away of a fortune, or the death of one precious to us, there are a reality, a hardness, and a finality about the message that were utterly absent from our forecasts.

Do not let us imagine that the change in the mood of Jesus makes Him less heroic. The courageous man is not the one who has no fears, whose heart does not quail as he faces some grave peril, but the courageous man is the one whose spirit masters these tremors and forebodings under the impulse of some great call of love, or duty, or honor to which he absolutely surrenders himself. The truth is that the shrinking of Jesus from the cross, while it does not make Him less heroic, brings Him vastly nearer to humanity than any stolid advance toward death could possibly do. We see that the divine life was lived under human conditions and limitations, and that in the profoundest sense the Master can sympathize with the sorrows and burdens of humanity.

A question arises just here which must often have occurred to students of the gospels. Why was it that when Jesus came face to face with the cross, upon this last night of His life, He was so profoundly affected by it. As we have seen, just before the transfiguration He anticipated this hour, and administered a severe rebuke to Peter when he ventured to question the accuracy of the forecast. He had deliberately re-

turned from Perea to Jerusalem to bear a witness which even the most obtuse of the disciples had thought would result in His death. Two days before this He had delivered messages that made impossible any compromise with those seeking His life. Socrates had done much the same. He had seen from afar what was coming; he had refused to seek safety by flight; he persisted in his faithful but irritating message. Still when Socrates came to meet death he did it with calmness and serenity. Neither Zenophon nor Plato give the impression that Socrates was at all loth to drink the poison, if that was what the law ordained.



From a photograph.

Olive Trees in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The Evangelists do not give that impression of Jesus in their account of this night. To be sure, when Judas had betrayed Him, and before Caiaphas and Herod and Pilate, the mood of the upper room returned. Socrates actually did not meet death more bravely and unflinchingly than did Jesus; and there is no comparison between the horror a death on the cross would arouse in any finely organized man, and the dread of drinking a quick and painless poison.

Why, then, did Jesus, who answers so magnificently to every test of courage, dread so profoundly the death of the cross, that on this night in Gethsemane He prayed that, if it were possible, He might be delivered from it?

The writers of the New Testament have an explanation of this singular fact that, for many centuries, has profoundly impressed the thought of Christians.



They say that death did not mean to Jesus what it meant to Socrates. To Socrates it meant what it means generally to men—the end of life on the earth, with a more or less clear anticipation of life under other conditions. To Jesus His death meant personal identification with the spiritual loss and ruin of sinful humanity. It was not the physical dread of death that appealed to Jesus, except in the very slightest degree, if at all. Death to Jesus was the symbol and penalty of the curse of sin. The death of Jesus meant the absolute and perfect participation, on His part, in the curse and destiny of sinful humanity. And the victory of Jesus over death means that sinful humanity is to share His destiny just as He by His death has shared its lot.

If the death of Jesus was what the great Messianic prophecies had indicated the sufferings of the servant of Jehovah should be (Is. 53:5, 6); if His death was what He Himself declared it was, “a ransom for many” (Mt. 20:28); if He was, as the Baptist declared, “the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world” (Jo. 1:29), the reason of the agony in the garden, of the sweating of the drops of blood, of the prayer that He might not drink “the cup” becomes intelligible. The veil is lifted a little. We can understand how the agony of Gethsemane points to the eternal relations, and to the worth in the eternal realm of the cross of Christ.

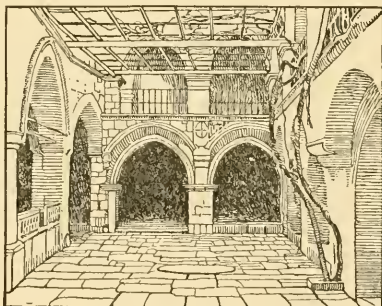


## CHAPTER XLVIII.

### CAIAPHAS AND PILATE.

Jo. 18:12—19:16.

The late Professor Simon Greenleaf of the Harvard Law School undoubtedly expresses the opinion of most competent lawyers that the condemnation of Jesus by the Jewish authorities as worthy of death, was, in spite of its grave technical irregularities, from the point of view of the Jewish lawyers and judges, entirely justifiable. It is important to realize sharply the truth of this statement in order that we may see precisely what was the sin and crime of those who brought Jesus to the cross. Of course it must be conceded at the outset of this examination that Annas and Caiaphas and their party had a strong desire to get Jesus out of the way, and that they made use of their position, and of every technical point to compass this end. But the critical point in the two Jewish examinations was when Caiaphas asked Jesus the solemn, direct question, "I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (Mt. 26:63). To that Jesus unequivocally answered, "I am" (Mk. 14:62). Then it was that the high priest rent his garments, and said, "He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need



**Courtyard of the Traditional House of Caiaphas.**

have we of witnesses" (Mt. 26:65)? There can be no doubt that this claim of Jesus was in their eyes to be justly construed as blasphemy, and that the prescribed penalty of blasphemy was death (Deut. 18:20).

What, then, was the sin of the Jewish leaders in this judgment against Jesus? Was it not this, that traditional views and partisan considerations and selfish advantage had so blinded their eyes that they could not see or understand that the claim of Jesus was true that He was indeed the Messiah, the Son of God? The only values they could appreciate were those that appealed to their prejudices based on an unspiritual view of life, and to their pride of place. The sin of the leaders of the nation who sought the death of Jesus was simply the commonplace, vulgar sin of "blindness of heart," unresponsiveness to spiritual values, the inability to appreciate anything that could not be reduced to the terms of their immediate desires. The sin of these ancient Hebrews, then, was in no way unique or peculiar, it is the sin that meets us to-day in our houses and in our business and social life—the sin of spending money for that which is not bread, and labor for that which does not satisfy because we do not see what is good (Is. 55:2). The things of supreme worth are before us, and we do not respond to them.

This witness of Jesus to Himself before Caiaphas is one of the mountain peaks of the gospel story. For a long time Jesus carefully avoided asserting His divinity. He wished to have it come to His disciples as a slowly ripening conviction, identified with the very substance of their spiritual experience. He did not tell them how great He was, He let them perceive it. But now before Caiaphas He makes the staggering assertion, "I am the Christ, the Son of God." He not only made the assertion, but He gave up His life in witness to its truth. Nothing can be plainer

than that His enemies had no case against Him before He made that answer to the high priest. After that they had all the case they wanted. This was the supreme witness of Jesus. He died because He could not deny Himself. Perhaps those who have argued for the divinity of Jesus have not always seen as clearly as they should the pivotal nature of His answer to Caiaphas. He knew who He was and what He was better than any one else; and, on trial for His life, when another answer, or even an evasion, would have foiled His enemies, He said, "I am the Messiah, the Son of God."

The sin of Pilate was not the same as the sin of Caiaphas and the priestly leaders. The sin of the latter was that of moral blindness; the sin of Pilate was deliberate disloyalty to the light. Pilate knew that he was putting an innocent man to death; he detected at once the difference between the kingship Jesus asserted and any claim that would annoy the Roman power; he honestly tried to save Jesus, proposing one weak compromise after another. And at length he yielded to the suggestion that, if he let Jesus go, his enemies would make out a plausible case against him of unfriendliness to Tiberius Cæsar. The struggle cost Pilate a great deal. He saw clearly enough what was right. His sympathies, his moral nature, and the entreaties of his wife were all on the side of Jesus; but the harm this unreasoning Jewish mob could do him at Rome, the assumption that probably one fanatic more or less in turbulent Jewry was a neglectable factor, overbore his conscience and judgment, and, in the terse and terrible words of John, that read like a sentence from the biting page of Tacitus, "Then therefore he delivered him unto them to be crucified" (Jo. 19:16).

It may be said that the sin of Caiaphas is simply the resultant of the sin of Pilate, that by repeated disloyalties to conscience men lose the power of moral

discrimination, but that does not always account for unresponsiveness to spiritual values. Heredity, training, atmosphere, prejudice, partisan interest, selfish advantage, really blind men's eyes to the things of supreme worth. Such forces operated, for example, with the Apostle Paul. It is not inconceivable that if he, at this time, had been on the Sanhedrin that condemned Jesus he would have voted with the party of Caiaphas. But it cannot be doubted that disloyalties to conscience like that of Pilate sear the moral nature, so that the power to discern the truth at all is lessened. Goethe was right when he said, "He who sins against the light kisses the lips of a blazing cannon." The tremendous penalty of sin is not external punishment of any kind, long or short, but the disintegration of faculties so that they do not function, and men having eyes see not. How far the sin of Caiaphas was like the sin of Pilate, and how far it was like the sin of Paul, only the All Wise Reader of the secrets of the heart can determine.

The report of Pilate's examination of Jesus makes it plain that before the man who really held the death penalty in his hand, Jesus withdrew nothing that He had asserted before Caiaphas. He is a king. He claims it, and the procurator feels that it is true. Pilate sees that with the old purple cloak thrown about Him, with the crown of thorns from which the blood drips upon His head, with a stick in His hand, and with the spittle of the soldiers upon His beard, He is the royal One, and he has a strange consciousness that he is before the judgment seat of Jesus, while Jesus seems to be before his tribunal.

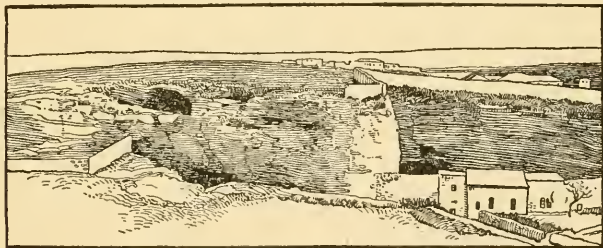
## CHAPTER XLIX.

### "HE DIED FOR OUR SINS."

Mt. 27:32-66.

There was no appeal from the decision of Pilate. Roman law enjoined the immediate execution of a sentence that could not be appealed from, hence that very afternoon Jesus was remanded to the Roman soldiery to be crucified. This is one of the most cruel forms of executing the death penalty that men have ever devised, and happily the prevalence of humane sentiments has banished it from the borders of civilization.

The events of that afternoon have been burned into the consciousness of the modern world. Many



The New Calvary, Showing the Face of the Cliff.

Drawn from a photograph taken from the north wall of Jerusalem.

of the most celebrated works of art in sculpture and painting have set before us these incidents. The most competent writers in both prose and poetry have striven to set that afternoon vividly before our imaginations. One day in the year throughout Christendom is devoted to the memory of those hours, and the most ignorant peasant in Southern Europe knows what the crucifix means, and, as she kisses the image,

has recalled to mind some features of that astounding event. That Friday afternoon of April has become the outstanding day in human history. Throughout the centuries, when men have felt the pressure and realized the power of sin, and above all, when they have been called from the earth to meet God, they have thought of Golgotha, and of the three crosses and of the Divine sufferer.

It is needless for us to recite the events. It will be more profitable for us to consider the question which lies so near the heart of the religion of Jesus: What is the significance of these occurrences? What is the meaning of the cross of Christ?

The crucifixion of Jesus, from one point of view, is the gravest indictment conceivable against the providential government of the world. What kind of God is it who can permit the purest and noblest life to be caught in the whirring machinery of cause and effect to perish cruelly and shamefully on the cross? If this can be the destiny of a career like that of Jesus, the ruler of the universe must be utterly regardless of moral distinctions. Virtue is only a name, and the force at the heart of things is utterly blind or malevolent. The evil there is in the world often taxes the faith of the best men in the goodness of God. The death of Jesus upon the cross seems to be a conclusive demonstration that God is not good. If the cross was the portion of the pure and holy Jesus, what reason have we for believing that anything good is in store for one of us, except as good may be wrought out by mere chance?

There is absolutely no answer to such questions, except the most sinister one, unless the death of Jesus looks beyond itself, and accomplishes results in the moral realm adequate to the stupendous cost of the means. The writers of the New Testament give that interpretation to the death of Jesus. They declare that it is not an end, but the means to an end which



amply and gloriously justifies it. They say that "He died for our sins," and that, through His death, the possibility of the forgiveness of sins, of the redemption of human life from the power of evil, and of the reconciliation of man with God is realized. In other words, God permitted the tragedy of the cross, with its blazing injustice, for a purpose of love; and the cross of Christ, instead of demonstrating the carelessness of God as to moral distinctions, is the supreme evidence of His good will and love to men. The Apostle Paul goes so far as to say that it is such an overwhelming proof of the love of God for man that it is a reason for believing that God will do every thing that omnipotence can do for man. This is the answer of the Scriptures to the apparently inexplicable enigma of the death of Christ upon the cross. This is the way that inspired men have harmonized the crucifixion with a belief in the moral order of the world.

The question now arises, What did the death of Jesus accomplish upon the cross? How did it achieve the results the Scriptures attribute to it? It is no answer to that question simply to say that the cross of Christ manifests the love of God. Indeed, a strict logician is justified in saying that such an answer begs the question. Love must be purposeful and intelligent to manifest itself in an act. If you are walking along a riverside with your boy, and throwing yourself into the water risk your life, you do not manifest your love for your boy by that act of insane folly. Your sacrifice of yourself has no intelligent relation to the welfare of the child. God does not and cannot manifest His love for men by any spectacular sacrifice on the part of Christ. But if your boy has fallen into the river, and you plunge after him, to save him at the risk or cost of your own life, that act of sacrifice demonstrates your love for your child. There is an intelligible relationship between



the sacrifice you make of yourself and what you propose to accomplish.

There have been many answers to the question as to how the death of Christ saves men. Great theologies have divided in regard to that question. Answers that have been deemed conclusive and satisfactory in one age have not been so regarded in another, but all along the history of Christian thought, from the days of Paul to our own time, followers of Christ have believed that the death of Jesus accomplished something in the eternal realm that made the forgiveness of human sin and the salvation of men possible. The crucifixion of Jesus was not permitted by the moral indifference of God to holiness, but it was a manifestation of the love of God, who at this enormous cost, saved men from the guilt and power of sin.

Still, however inadequate the plummet of our philosophies may be to sound the depths of this transcendent revelation, the witness of human experience has triumphantly vindicated the reality of the release from sin which the cross of Christ accomplished. Ten thousand times ten thousand hearts are now rejoicing in the spiritual emancipation and sense of fellowship with God that have come to them through the cross of Christ, and this experience has continued in different races and successive generations for hundreds of years. We take down from our shelves Ignatius of the second century, and he speaks of the cross of Christ as we do to-day. He finds in it the ground of peace with God. We go to India, and mingle with a group of native Christians and they say the same things. Across the seas and the centuries Christian hands clasp Christian hands. Followers of Jesus look into one another's eyes, and, though of different race and tradition and speech, they recognize one another as partakers of the mighty inner experience that centers about the cross of Christ.

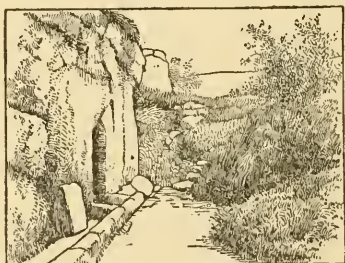
## CHAPTER L.

### THE LIVING JESUS.

Mt. 28:1-15; Lu. 24:13-35; Jo. ch. 20.

If we were reading the gospel narrative for the first time and came to the account of the death of Jesus upon the cross we should doubtless be conscious not only of the cruelty and injustice of the ending of His life, but we should feel that it was incongruous that One who was born in the way the gospels describe, who showed such power over nature and over death itself, who claimed and manifested such relationship to God, should close His existence in dying like common men. The grave and worms and corruption are not an ending that carry the story truly on. Perhaps we could not say beforehand just how the arc of such a life should complete itself within the range of human vision, but certainly it ought not to end in death, and much less in the death of the cross. Whatever else we may think of the record of the resurrection of Jesus, it cannot be denied that it matches the account of the life of Jesus. The narrative, on the plane on which it is projected, is harmonious with itself.

This way of regarding the resurrection of our Lord is in perfect accord with many of the representations of the New Testament. In the first Apostolic sermon, delivered a few weeks after the morning of the resurrection, we find Peter saying that God raised up Jesus,



From a photograph.

Entrance to the New Tomb.

having loosed the pangs of death, because "it was not possible that he should be holden of it" (Acts 2:24). The meaning is plain. The resurrection was not accomplished by some addition to the power that was inherent in Jesus during His life. The resurrection was simply a manifestation of the power we see in Jesus when He commanded the winds to cease, when He recalled Lazarus to life, and when He was conscious of the closest fellowship with the Father. "It was not possible that he should be holden of it." The ideas of Jesus and death are as incongruous as the ideas of a Rothschild and abject poverty; as the ideas of Sir Isaac Newton and crass ignorance; as the ideas of Beethoven and insensibility to musical harmonies. What is in our minds when we think of Jesus as irreconcilable with our thought of death? The declaration, "Jesus is dead," is a contradiction in terms. "It was not possible that he should be holden of it." From this point of view the resurrection of Jesus is not a miracle. The miraculous element lies far back of the resurrection morning, it lies in the personality of Jesus Himself. That is the wonderful, the astounding phenomenon. The miracles, as we call them, recorded in the gospels, the words of wisdom, the supernatural consciousness, are all manifestations of the one great miracle, the personality, the character of Jesus. This view does not minimize the place of the resurrection in Christian evidences, rather it enhances it, for it does not regard the rising of Jesus from the dead as an isolated phenomenon; it regards it as the natural, the inevitable sequence of the divine life—"It was not possible that he should be holden of it."

But there is good reason for doubting whether the New Testament writers and the early Christians regarded the resurrection chiefly as a piece of evidence to other truths. It was something much more vital than a link in a chain of logic. Peter brought out the ruling idea of the first disciples in his explanation to

the Sanhedrin of the healing of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate. He said, "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even in him doth this man stand here before you whole" (Acts 4:10). In other words, through the resurrection, Jesus continued to be an active personality in human concerns. The risen and living Jesus restored the lame man. "In him doth this man stand here before you whole." To the earliest Christian preachers the resurrection was not so much an argument as a fact that was self-explaining. It showed that Jesus was still alive.

The truth that the mighty personality, which it was impossible for death to hold, is a present active force in the world to-day, comes very near to the heart of the gospel. Christianity is not expressed in a series of propositions, no matter how sublime or inspiring they may be; nor do men embrace Christianity by assenting to propositions. The religion of Jesus consists primarily in the relation between a human soul and a Person. When Jesus was on earth He said, "Come unto me," "Follow me," "Abide in me." These commands were not simply for the Hebrews of Palestine during those short years of the first half of the first century. They are perpetual calls, opening perpetual privileges, because He who spoke them is still living, and invites men to-day to the fellowship that He offered to the first disciples. All that Jesus was on earth to men, all that He became to men by His sacrificial death on the cross, is available for men through the channels of personal fellowship with the living Jesus.

The friend of the Master is not devoted to Him simply as to a beautiful memory. He sustains the most intimate relation to a living Person. He, the living Jesus, is now thinking of His friends, guiding them, opening ways for them, revealing His will to

them, giving them assurances of His love. Many a time in the pages of the gospel, in prayer, in the fulfilment of some taxing duty for His sake, we seem to catch intimations of His presence; and one of these days there will be a swift transition from the stony streets of our earthly cities to the golden pavements of the New Jerusalem; from the dwellings of wood and stone in which we live, to the Father's house; from seeing Him through a glass darkly to beholding Him face to face.

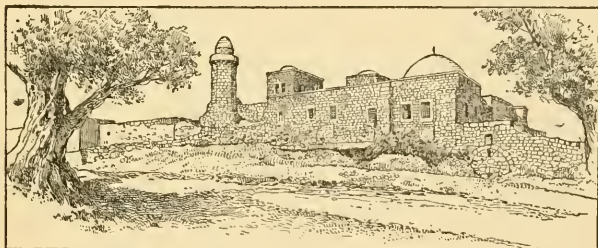
## CHAPTER LI.

### “THE SAME JESUS.”

Mt. 28:16-20; Lu. 24:44-53; Jo. ch. 21.

In the course of these studies we have frequently alluded to the difficulty of conceiving that the gospel narrative is the product of the imagination of the early Christians. That difficulty also confronts us when we consider the record of the post-resurrection appearances of Jesus. These accounts are marked by so many delicate insights and correspondencies that they bear upon their face the proof that they are narratives of actual events.

For example, what a marvelous thing it is that the Evangelists' apparent unconsciousness of what they



The Church of the Ascension, on the Mount of Olives.

were doing should have attributed to the Jesus of the resurrection the traits that are peculiarly characteristic of the Master before His crucifixion! Some of these qualities are so outstanding that they attract the attention of the dullest reader.

One of the marked characteristics of Jesus in the days of His earthly life was the perfect balance in His conduct between the ideal and the practical. That

is a rare combination of qualities, for the idealist is commonly thoughtless about common affairs, and the practical man is apt to think lightly of what makes no direct appeal to the perceptions of his senses. Though Jesus had the secret springs of His life in the unseen, and loved to retire to solitudes for self-communion and prayer, He never lost touch with the common interests and cares of humanity. His sermons and parables show the keenest appreciation of the facts of life and of the ways of men. His miracles were elicited by His sympathy with suffering. Upon the cross, when the face of God seemed to be hidden, and the burden of the world's sin rested upon His soul, He was so thoughtful for His mother that He designated as an arrangement for her comfort that John should care for her. The same trait marks the Jesus of the resurrection. Though in His brain are the thronging secrets behind the veil, He has a living sympathy with the toils and cares of our common lot. His first thought after the resurrection was for His disciples and especially for the faithless Peter to whom He sent a message by Mary Magdalene. We cannot miss the exquisite tact with which He made Himself known to the disciples at Emmaus, or the sympathy with which He met the doubt of Thomas. And when at Gennesaret the hungry and weary fishermen came to the shore they found that the Lord's hands had made ready the morning meal.

Another trait in the character of Jesus during His earthly life was His absolute frankness in circumstances that commonly lead men, at least by silence, to acquiesce in the errors of others. When others have touchingly manifested their appreciation of us it is by no means easy to rebuke them for their errors or faults. But directly after Peter had uttered his magnificent confession, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God," Jesus addressed to Peter one of the severest rebukes that ever fell from His lips. The



atmosphere of the scene on the beach at Gennesaret, after the resurrection, is suffused with the love-light that follows forgiveness and reconciliation, and yet, at that very time, Jesus administered a deserved rebuke to the Peter whom He restored, because the disciple was putting curiosity above duty.

Still another characteristic of the Master was His reluctance, in dealing with sinners, to drag their sins to a mortifying exposure. He quickened the conscience of sinful men, but He did not cross-examine them. There was an infinitely delicate reticence about Him in speaking of sins. In His light sinners knew their sins, and they knew that He knew them. That was enough. The probing, scrutinizing, tabulating disposition was not in Him. His dealing with the woman in Simon's house, with Zacchæus, with the woman taken in sin, illustrate this. The Jesus of the resurrection has the same trait. The first interview with Peter was private. No one knows what took place behind the closed doors in the house of Zacchæus; no one knows what took place between Peter and the Master. Before Peter's fellow disciples there is no railing accusation, no reproach no dragging the man to confession; only a question of love. The Jesus of the resurrection, who said to Peter in the early morning by the lakeside, "Lovest thou me," is the Jesus of Nazareth who said to the woman in Simon's house, "Thy sins are forgiven," and then to Simon, "for she loved much."

A striking feature of the thought of Jesus comes out in His teaching as to His kingdom. There runs through His words before His death an expectation that His claims would be universally acknowledged, that His kingdom would be world-wide. This peasant from an insignificant village declared that His field was the world. He spoke with much confidence of the time when men would come from every quarter to crowd into His kingdom. He went so far as to

say that He would be the judge of "all nations." One of the most quoted, massive utterances of the first Napoleon is his declaration, "I propose to make the Mediterranean a French lake," but that expression of imperial ambition dwindles beside the prediction of Jesus. We turn to the sentences which the Evangelists put on the lips of Jesus after the resurrection, and there runs through them the same magnificent confidence. We cannot be insensible to the sublime sweep of the last commission. Like His earlier utterances it embraces the world and anticipates its end: "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Mt. 28:18-20). These sentences bear the unmistakable impress of the mind of Jesus. They are of the same mintage as His earlier forecasts of His kingdom. It is not easy to account for them on any theory that denies that Jesus of Nazareth rose from the dead and spoke them.

It would be a pleasing task to elaborate, from this point of view, the proof it furnishes for the truth of the resurrection itself. But the argument would sweep far beyond the establishment of the historic fact; it would show that the experiences of the mysteries of existence wrought no change in our Lord's essential personality, or in His views of truth, from the very circumstance that after His resurrection He amended nothing, changed nothing, but instructed His disciples to proclaim what He had told them before to the end of time. Above all, this line of thought affords a firm basis for confidence that He is now what He is in the pages of the gospels. When we go to the pier to meet the friend who has been journeying for years in foreign lands, how difficult it is to

suppress the foreboding that he may have been so changed by his experience that the old tie of loving confidence has been broken! When Lazarus sat at the table with the sisters in Bethany after he had been restored from the dead, was the relationship between them and him the same as before his sickness? The facts we are studying answer such questions as to Jesus. Mary recognized the familiar tone in His voice. His attitude toward human life, His frankness, His sympathy, and His anticipations as to His kingdom are the same after the resurrection as before His death, and we may well believe that if the experiences of the cross and the grave did not change Him, nothing will, and when to-day we come to Him in prayer we come to One whom we know.

## CHAPTER LII.

### INTERPRETING JESUS.

#### Review of Chapters XL-LI.

The importance of the events in the life of Jesus after the triumphal entry into Jerusalem is indicated by the fact that the first three gospels devote from a third to a half of their space to this period, and John about three-fifths of his entire book. During the forty-seven days between the triumphal entry and the ascension we have the main facts for a just estimate of the personality and ministry of Jesus. This period reveals what He was and what He did for men. In view of these facts it is proper that we should devote the closing chapter of these studies to the general impression made by the New Testament portraiture of the career of Jesus.

To begin with, it is very plain that He appears before us as the culmination of a long, historic process in which the hopes and promises of the preceding revelation are finally realized. Jesus was profoundly conscious, and often asserted, that the stream of the historic revelation and of the spiritual life of Israel culminated in Himself. Time and again, He saw in the Old Testament Scriptures forecasts of the details of His own life. Lawgivers and prophets and religious poets were unconsciously guided in their utterances so that their words became anticipatory of His character and ministry. The great argument, which more than any other contributed to the establishment of the religion of Jesus upon a firm historical basis, was the one which Jesus Himself suggested in His conversation with the disciples on the way to Emmaus, when we are told that, "beginning from Moses and from all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning

himself" (Lu. 24:27). The staple of the Apostolic preaching was the elaboration of this argument (Acts 2:25-33; 7:51-53; 17:3). Because of this fact it is impossible to come to a just appreciation of Jesus by considering Him as an isolated personality in Palestine, or even by setting Him imaginatively in the environment of the civilization of that day. The environment of Jesus is something far larger than the Græco-Roman world of the first century. It is a divinely guided, vast historic process. It reaches back to the call of Abraham, and back of that to the promise in the garden. Vague hints and aspirations, the institutions of Israel, the strange, troubled national history, and the voices of prophets gradually becoming clearer and more positive make up the real environment of Jesus, and He is the product of the divine intelligence and purpose that was in the history and the institutions and the visions. Jesus fulfils and interprets the revelation to and in Israel, and at the same time that earlier revelation helps us to interpret Him.

Again, we must not forget that this portraiture of Jesus has clarified and determined the moral ideal of the race. Cicero makes the naïve remark that up to this time philosophers had not been able to agree what manner of person a perfectly good (just) man should be. Wherever the portraiture of Jesus in the gospels has gone that question has been finally answered. The only attempt worth noticing in modern times to throw doubt upon the perfection of the ideal of Jesus was by John Stuart Mill in his essay on *Liberty*, but readers of Mill's posthumous essays will recall that his mature judgment was that "it would not be easy, even for an unbeliever, to find a better translation of the rule of virtue from the abstract into the concrete than to endeavor so to live that Christ would approve our life" (*Three Essays on Religion*, p. 255). The record of the Evangelists

has done what the analyses and speculations of the finest brains could not accomplish. It has set forth a moral ideal which is self-evidencing and satisfying. It not only meets the needs of the reason and of the moral nature, but meets them so perfectly that by responding to it reason becomes true in its action and the moral nature purified. In philosophy and art and jurisprudence and science the sceptre of authority has passed from hand to hand, but in the spiritual life and in the practice of virtue Jesus holds an uncontested place.

Within the next half century the great historic faiths are destined to come to close quarters. Humanly speaking, the religious history of the next thousand years will be determined by the issue of the conflict that discerning minds see from afar. One of the supreme forces of Christianity in that struggle will be the supremacy of its moral ideal. The proclamation from whatever quarter of a nobler moral ideal than that of Christ would mean that slowly, perhaps, but nevertheless inevitably, Jesus would be superseded.

Still further, we must interpret the character and ministry of Jesus in the light of the fact that He is the source of the Christian experience. Principal Fairbairn remarks that there is a history which the record of the Evangelists has made as well as a history which it records. This is not the place in the page which remains even to hint at the course of his high argument, but his remark suggests that there is a Christian experience, with its sense of emancipation from sin, with its consciousness of peace with God, with its knowledge of fellowship with the unseen Christ, which has been generated by spiritual contact with the Person of whom the record tells us. No interpretation of Jesus makes full use of the materials at hand which does not explore and explain this marvelous Christian experience. The Christians who gather for a prayer meeting on the plains of Montana,

or in the trackless forests of the Canadian Northwest, understand better how the Christians of the second century in the Roman catacombs felt, and what they believed and hoped for, than a consummate archæologist, like Dill or Lanciani, comprehends the life of imperial Rome of the same period. The scholars draw inferences from fragments of literature and inscriptions and ruins, the Christians penetrate, by a deep interior bond of spiritual sympathy, into the very souls of their brethren, who loved and followed the Master seventeen hundred years ago. Like their brethren in Rome, the Christians of to-day have experienced the forgiveness of sins through faith in Jesus; they know that from Him there comes a new spiritual force for righteousness; they are persuaded that He, the shepherd of souls, will keep His flock. It is in the light of such facts and experiences that we must interpret the personality and ministry of Jesus; and it is in the light of all the facts that, when to-day the question is asked that is put to Simon Peter, we answer with him, "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God."







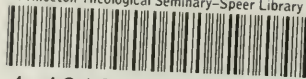
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